

GOPAL AND THE COWHERD



SHAHIN

This is a folktale which has delighted children all over India.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to narrate stories of this kind to his disciples to illustrate his teachings. This story explains the power of faith. The total faith of Gopal's mother is in sharp contrast with the teacher's disbelief.

This Amar Chitra Katha is based on the version in *Cradle Tales of Hinduism* by Sister Nivedita.

Gopal and the Cowherd is an example of the richness and appeal of the folktales of this country.

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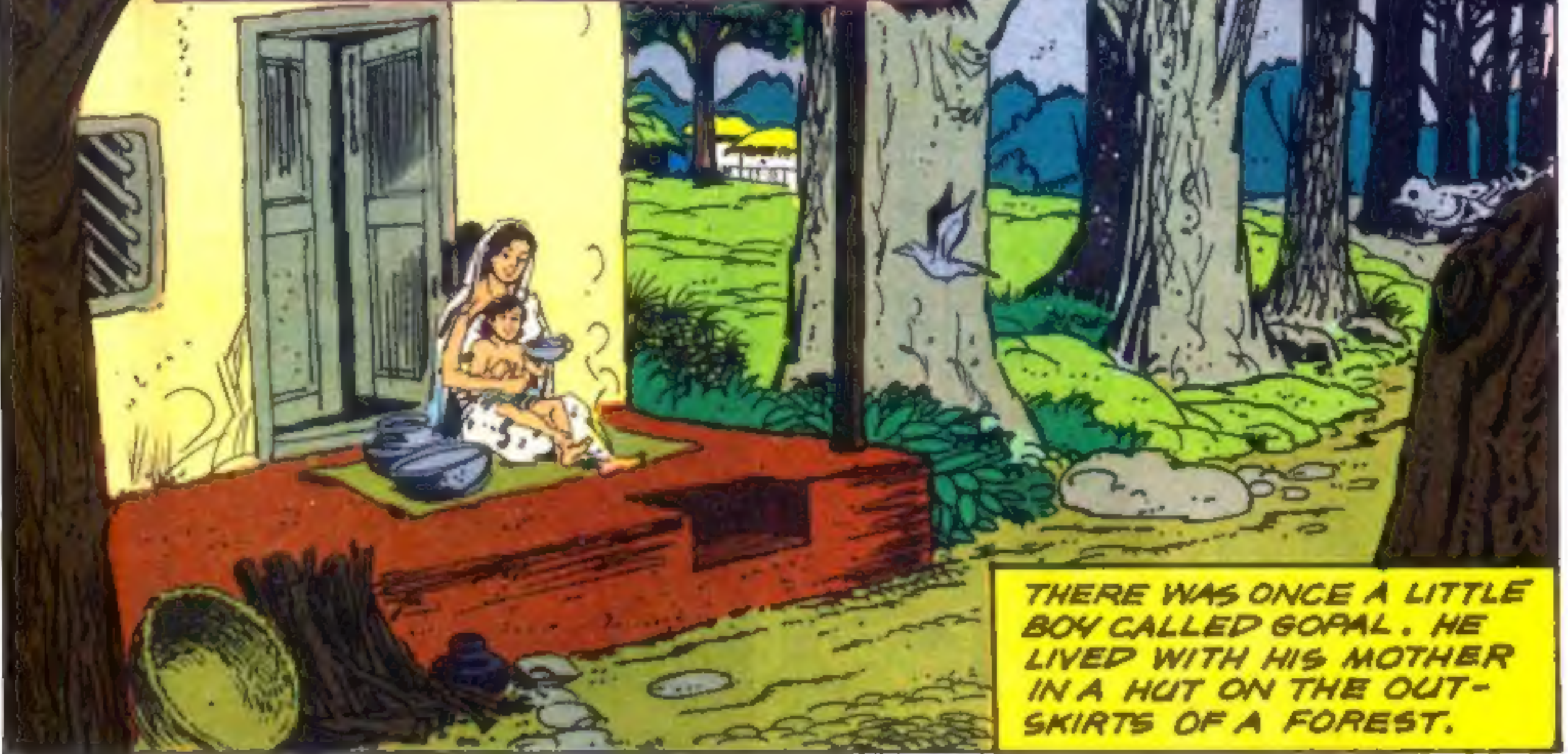
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GOPAL AND THE COWHERD



THERE WAS ONCE A LITTLE BOY CALLED GOPAL. HE LIVED WITH HIS MOTHER IN A HUT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A FOREST.

GOPAL'S FATHER HAD DIED BEFORE GOPAL WAS BORN. SO MOTHER AND SON HAD NO ONE TO SUPPORT THEM.

THERE IS NO MORE MILK IN THE HOUSE. WHAT SHALL I DO?



BUT THE PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE WERE VERY HELPFUL.

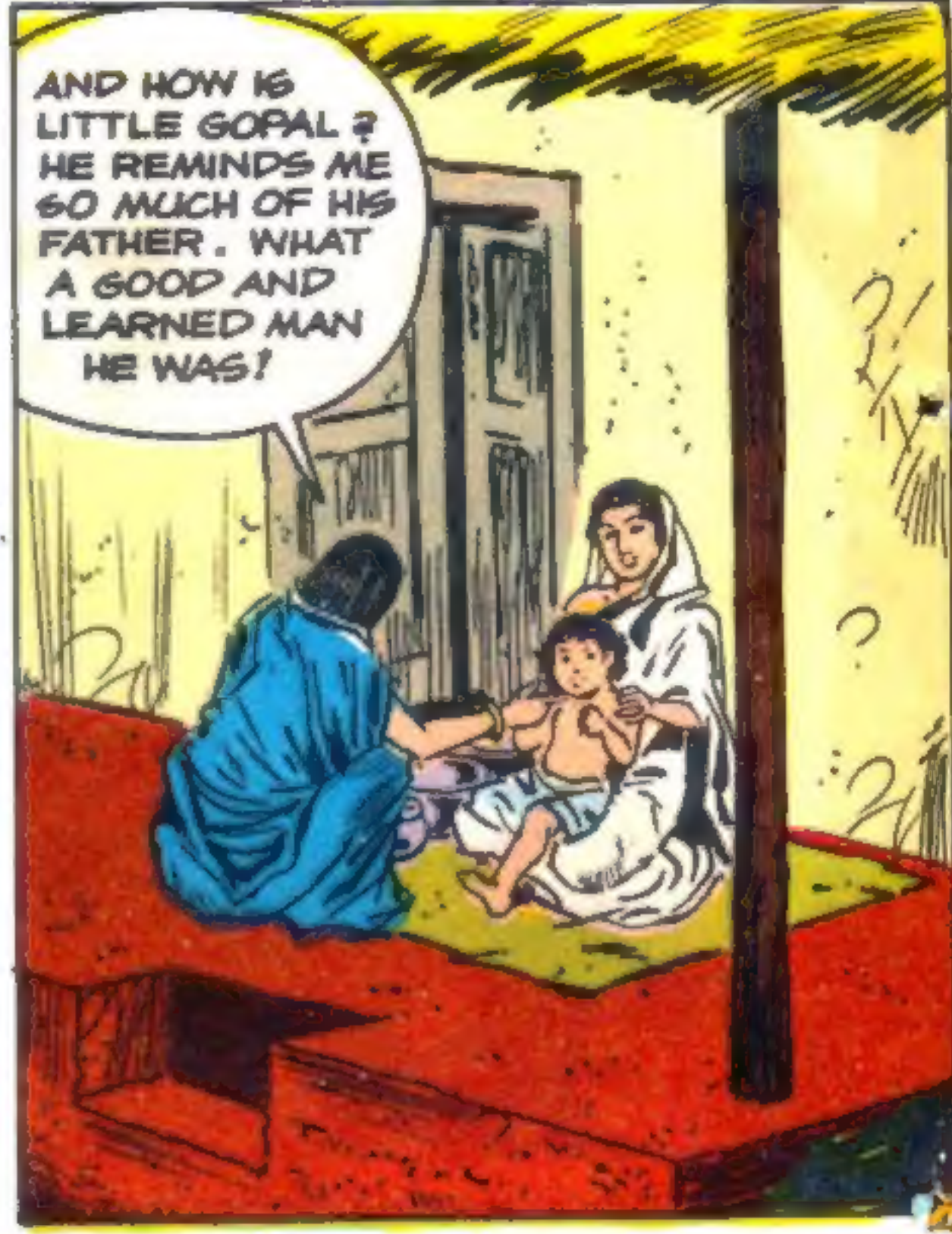
SISTER, I HAVE BROUGHT SOME MILK FOR GOPAL.

YOU ARE SO GOOD TO US.





NOT AT ALL ! I WISH I COULD DO MORE FOR YOU .



AND HOW IS LITTLE GOPAL ? HE REMINDS ME SO MUCH OF HIS FATHER . WHAT A GOOD AND LEARNED MAN HE WAS !



THE VILLAGERS HAD GIVEN GOPAL'S MOTHER A PLOT OF LAND .

THE RAINS ARE ALMOST HERE . MY HUSBAND AND THE OTHER MEN WILL TAKE TURNS TO PLOUGH AND SOW YOUR LAND .



YOU ARE ALL SO HELPFUL AND KIND . I DON'T KNOW HOW TO REPAY YOU .

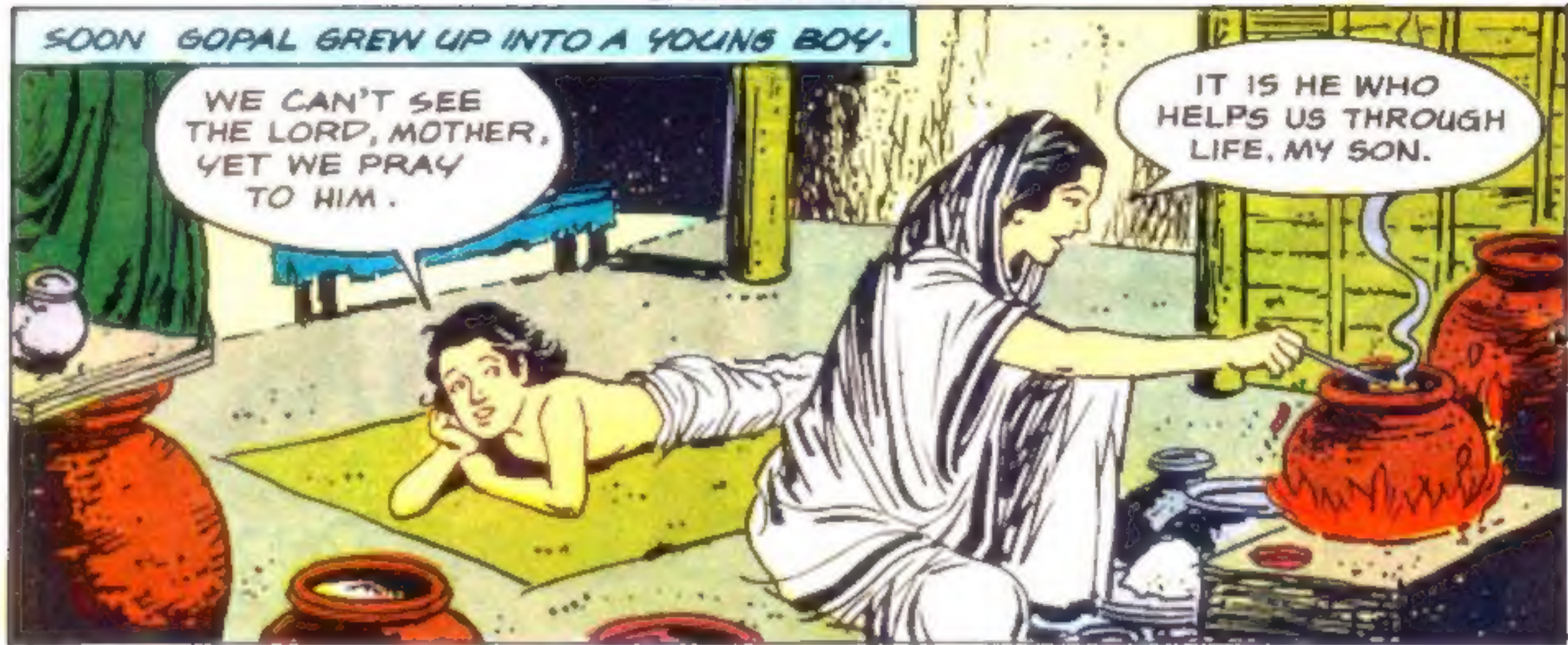
PLEASE DON'T SAY THAT . IT IS OUR DUTY TO HELP YOU AND WE ENJOY DOING IT .



SOON GOPAL GREW UP INTO A YOUNG BOY.

WE CAN'T SEE THE LORD, MOTHER, YET WE PRAY TO HIM.

IT IS HE WHO HELPS US THROUGH LIFE, MY SON.



MY LITTLE ONE HAS BEGUN TO THINK AND WONDER ABOUT THE WORLD. IT IS TIME HE WENT TO SCHOOL.

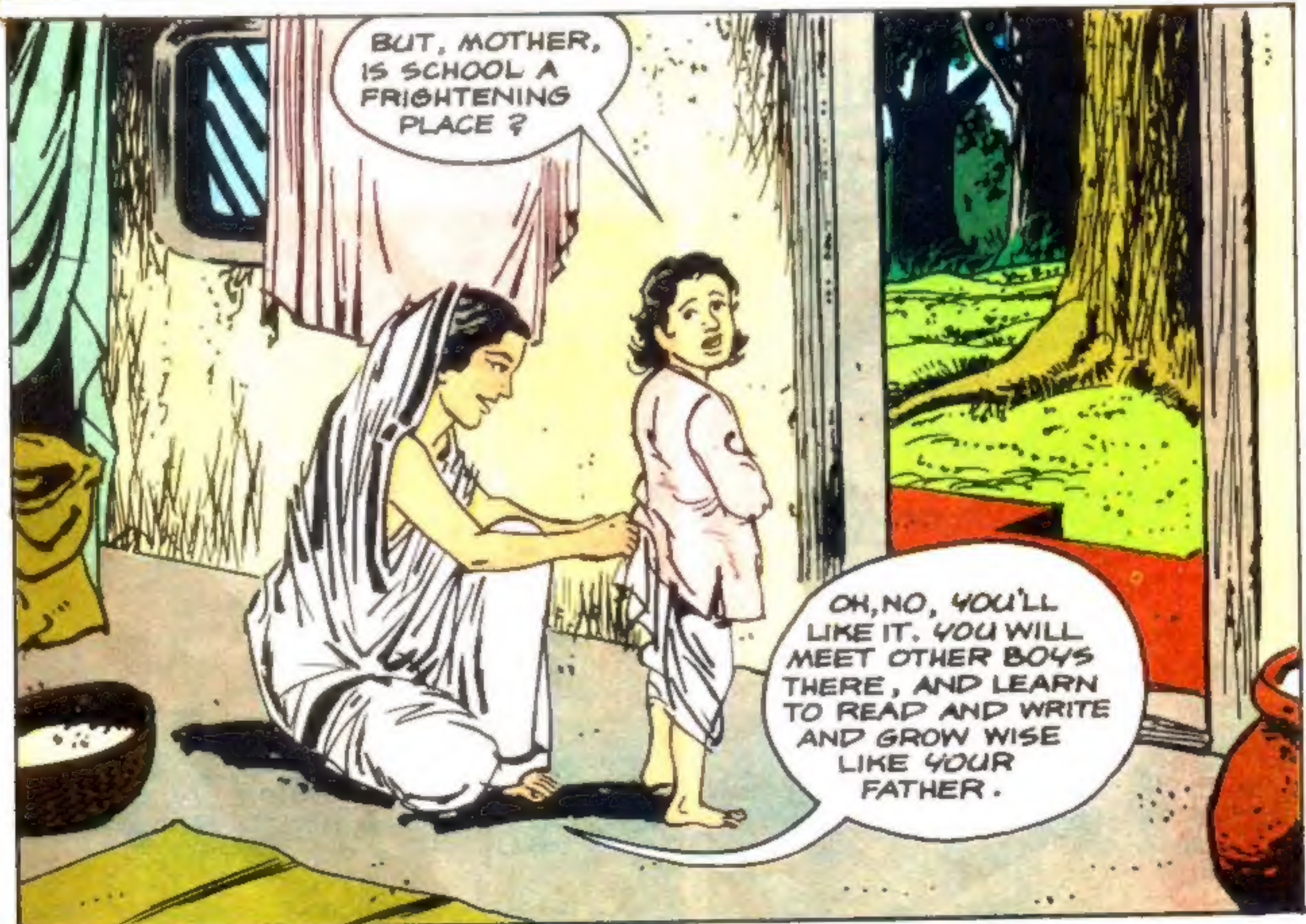
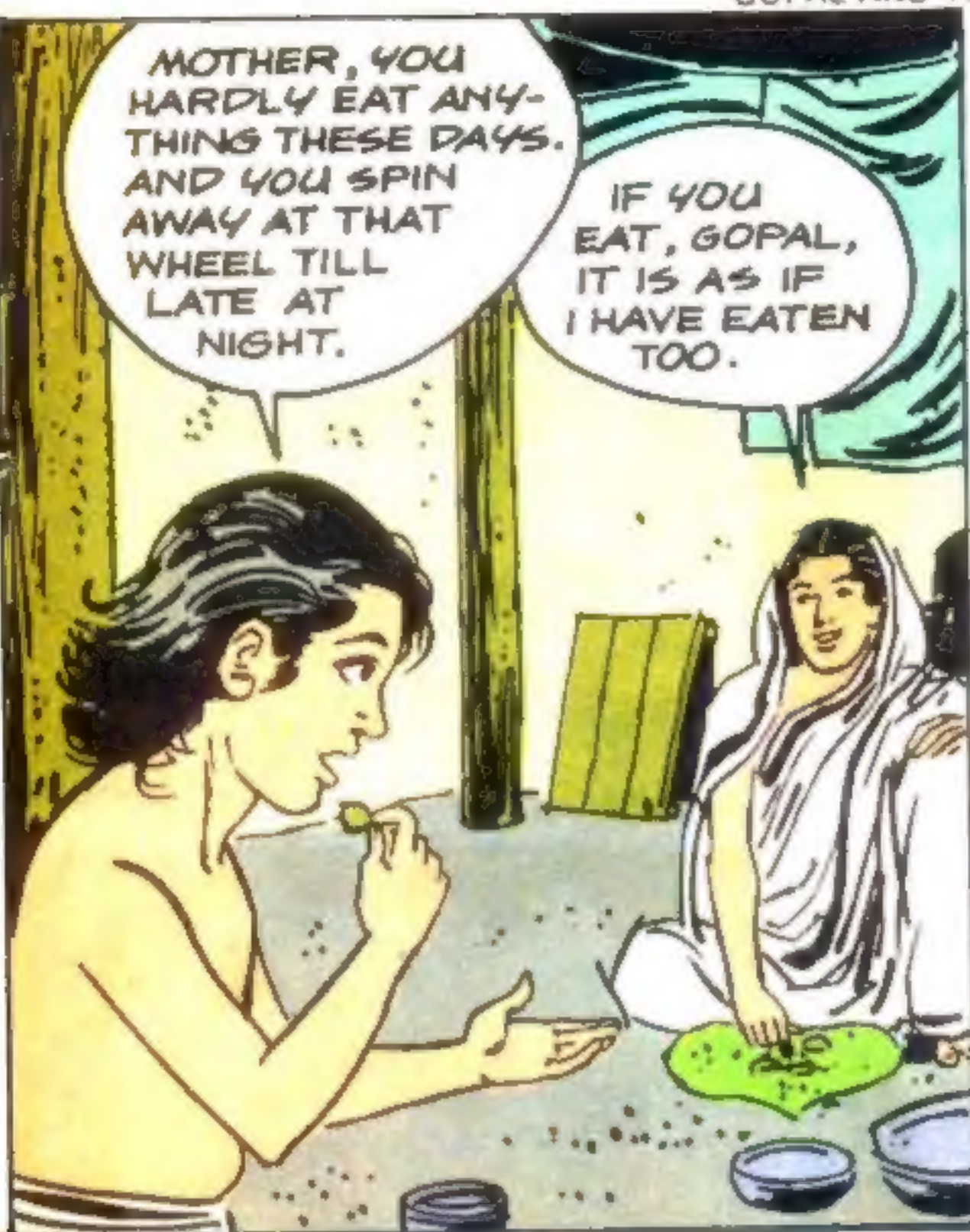


BUT HE WILL NEED NEW CLOTHES AND MATERIALS FOR READING AND WRITING. WHERE SHALL I GET THEM FROM?



I MUST SPIN AND SELL AS MUCH YARN AS I CAN.







... THE TREES BEGAN
TO CLOSE IN .

IT IS SO
FRIGHTENING
HERE . HAVE
I LOST MY
WAY ?



THE
BRANCHES
LOOK AS IF
THEY ARE
COMING TO
CATCH ME .



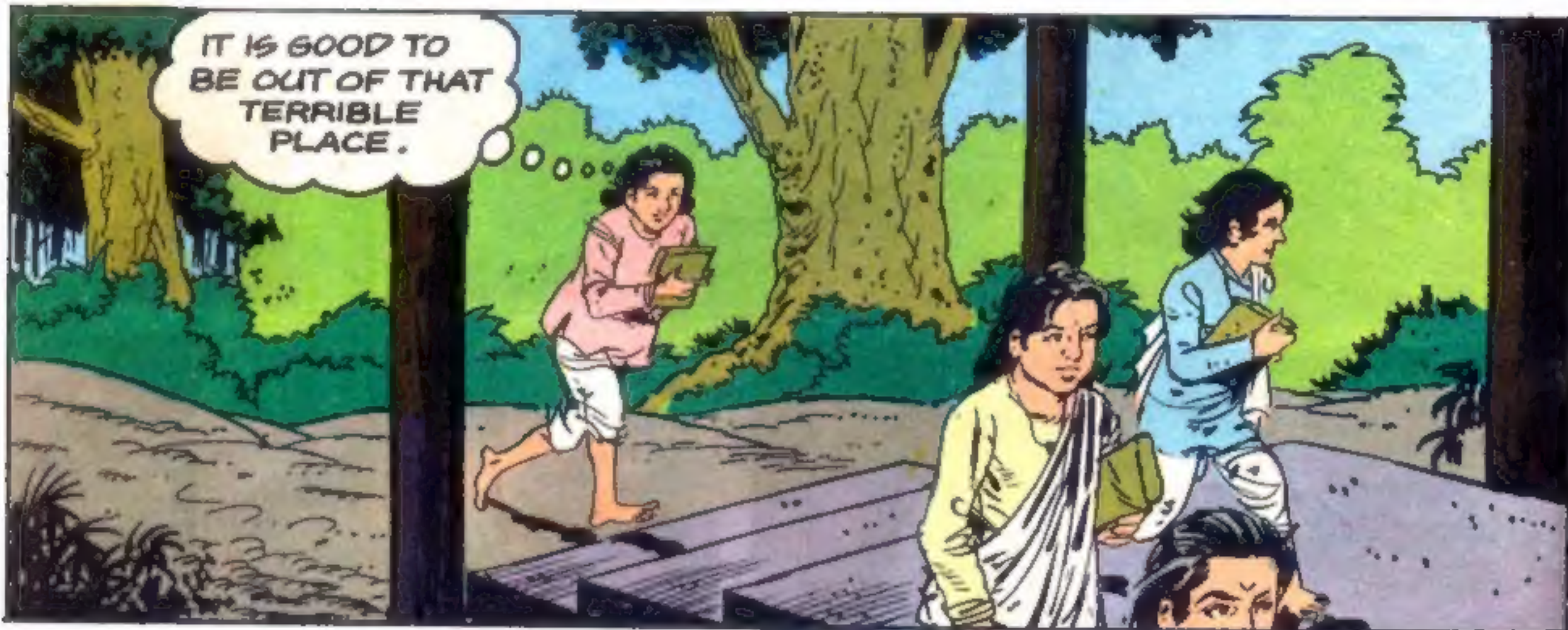
GOPAL
BEGAN
TO WALK
FASTER .



AT LAST, HE CAME TO THE END OF THE FOREST.

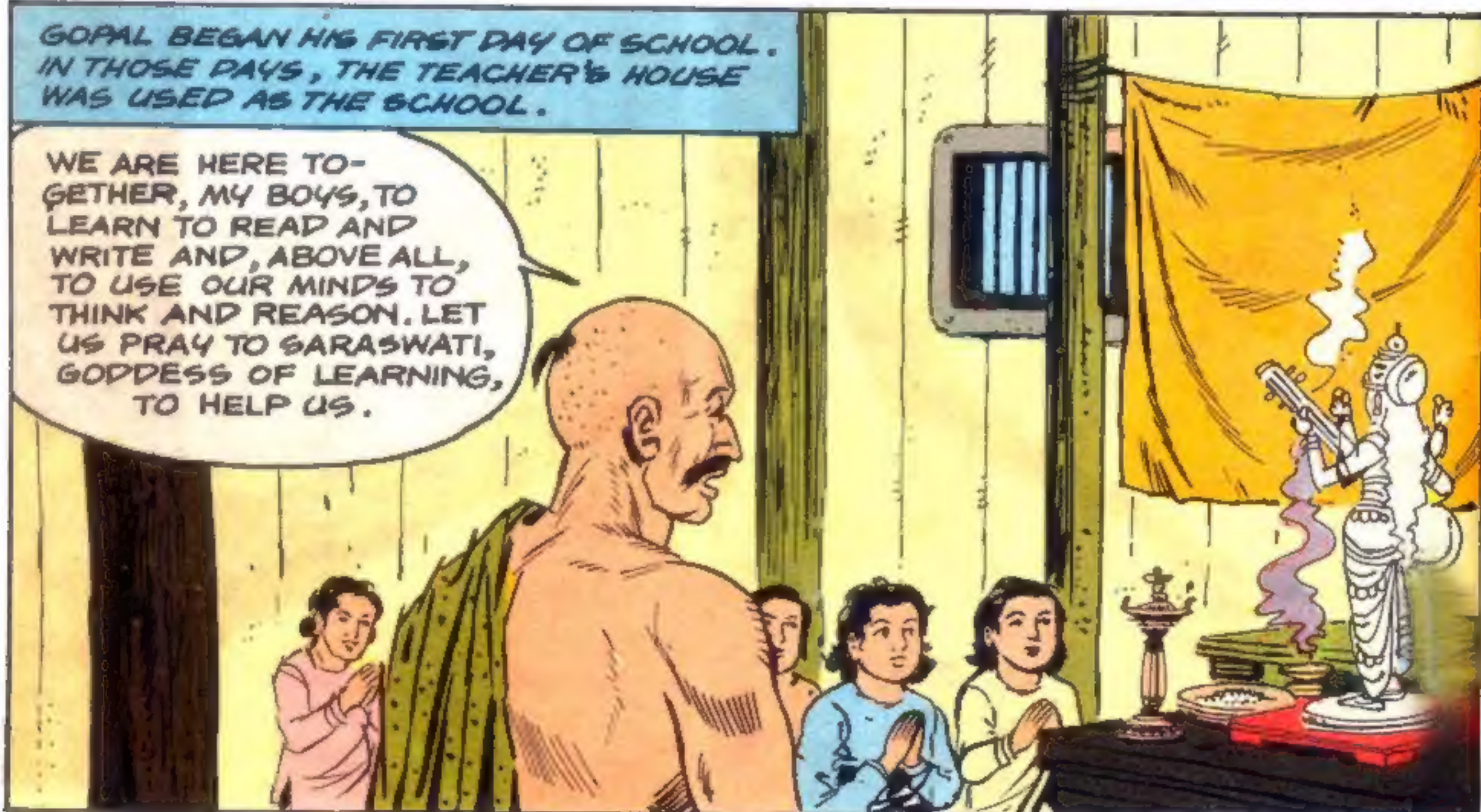


IT IS GOOD TO
BE OUT OF THAT
TERRIBLE
PLACE.



GOPAL BEGAN HIS FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.
IN THOSE DAYS, THE TEACHER'S HOUSE
WAS USED AS THE SCHOOL.

WE ARE HERE TO-
GETHER, MY BOYS, TO
LEARN TO READ AND
WRITE AND, ABOVE ALL,
TO USE OUR MINDS TO
THINK AND REASON. LET
US PRAY TO SARASWATI,
GODDESS OF LEARNING,
TO HELP US.

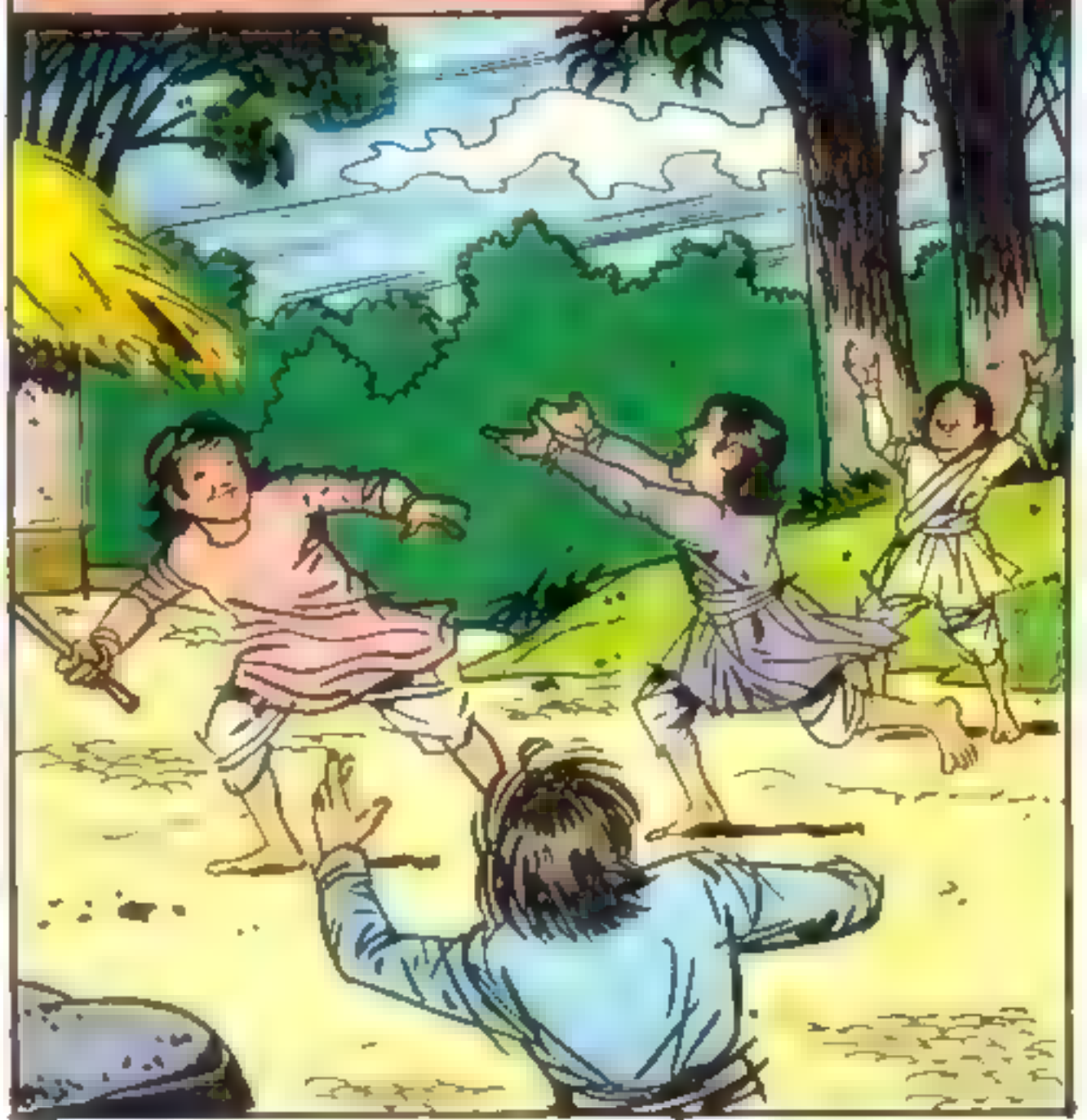


GOPAL HAD A GOOD DAY, ENJOYING ALL THAT HE WAS LEARNING.



IT WAS THE PRACTICE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN TO WRITE THEIR FIRST LETTERS IN SAND. LATER, THEY WROTE ON STIFF PALMYRA LEAVES.

GOPAL MADE FRIENDS WITH THE OTHER BOYS AND THEY PLAYED TOGETHER AFTER THEIR LESSONS.



BUT AS EVENING APPROACHED —

OH, I'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE FOREST AGAIN



AS HE WALKED HOME, HIS FOOTSTEPS BEGAN TO SLOW DOWN.

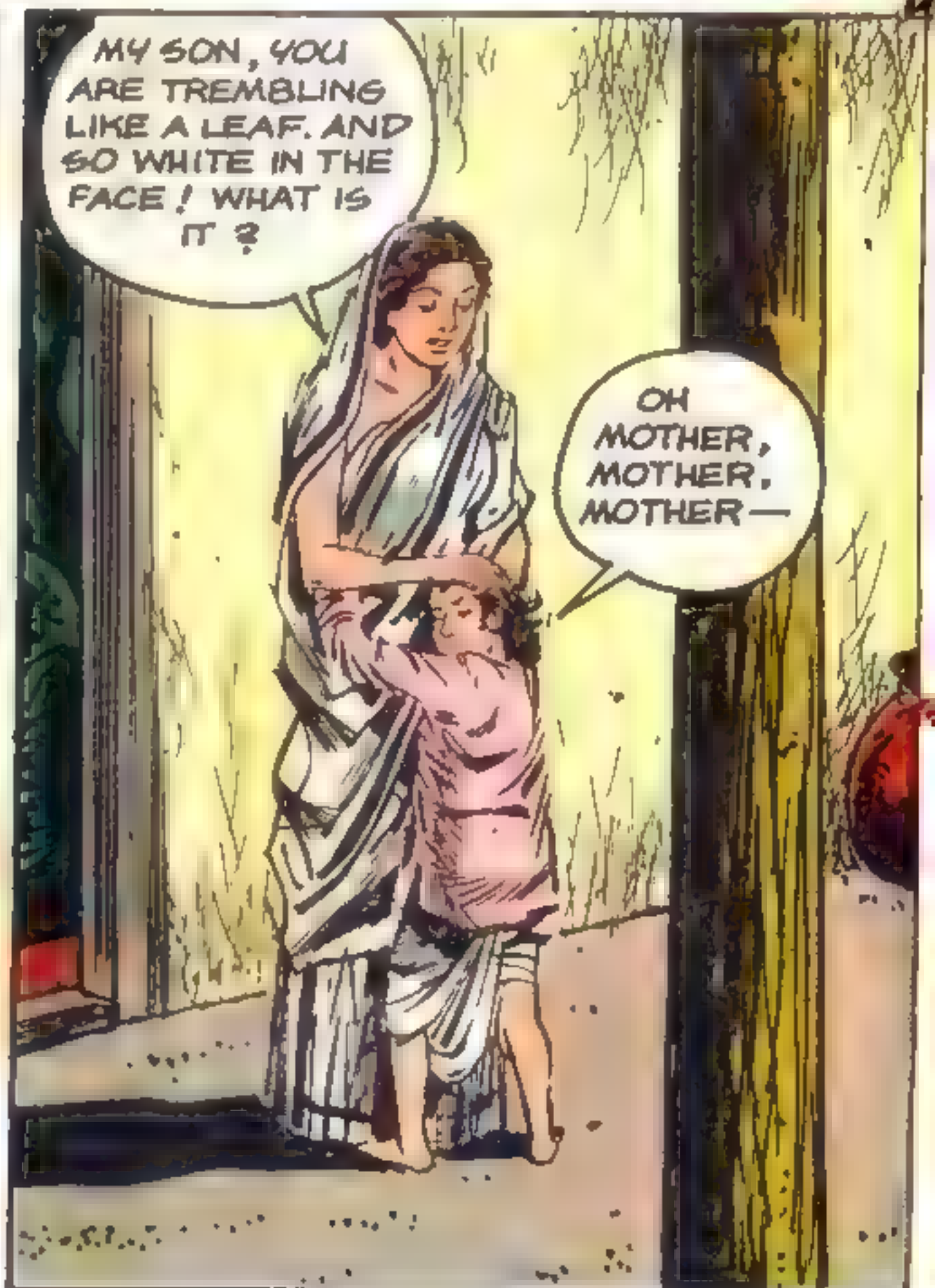
I AM SO AFRAID.

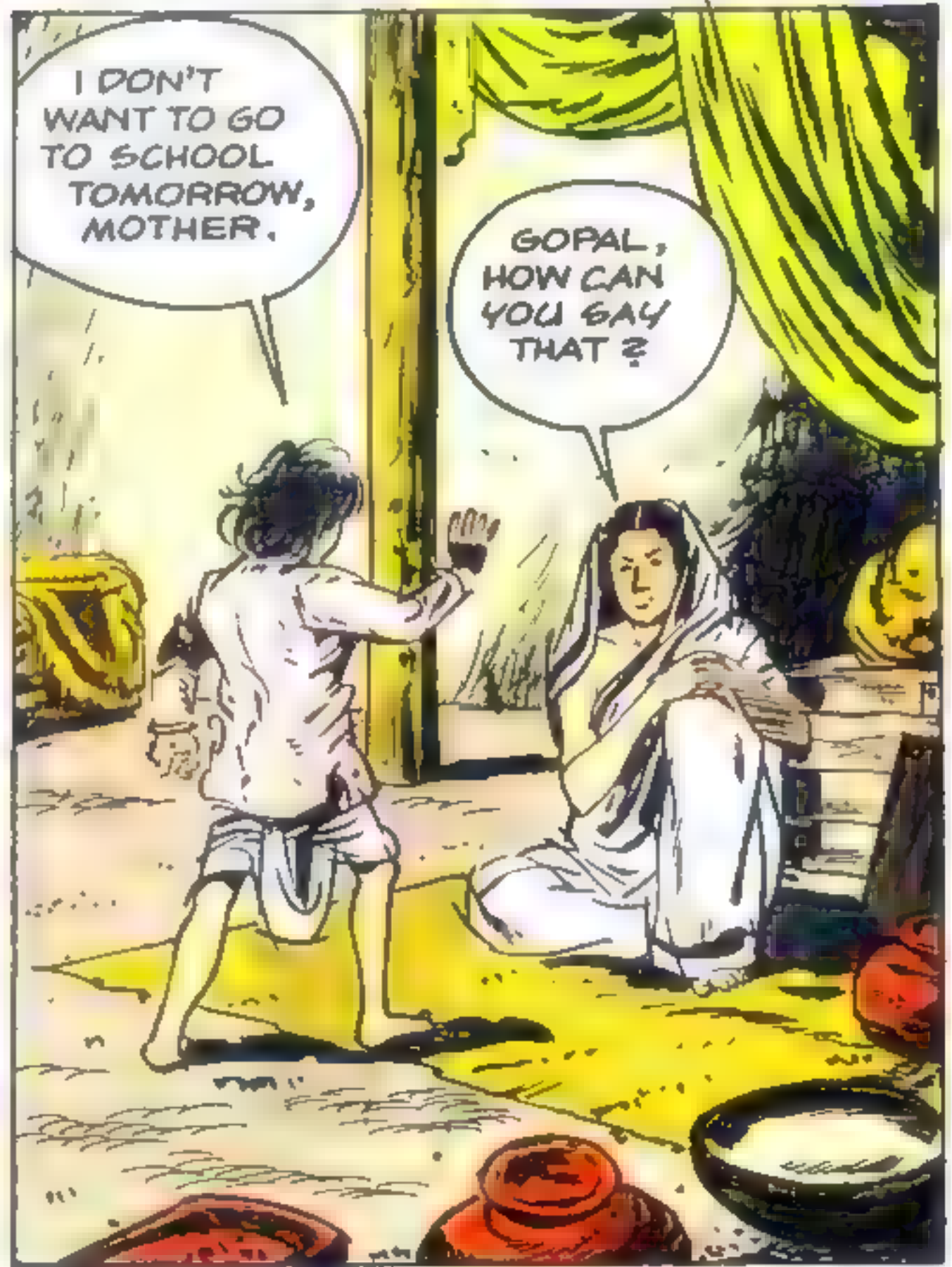


IT HAD GROWN QUITE
DARK. SUDDENLY—



MEANWHILE, AT HOME —





AND GOPAL STOOD THERE, LOOKING ASHAMED AND MISERABLE.



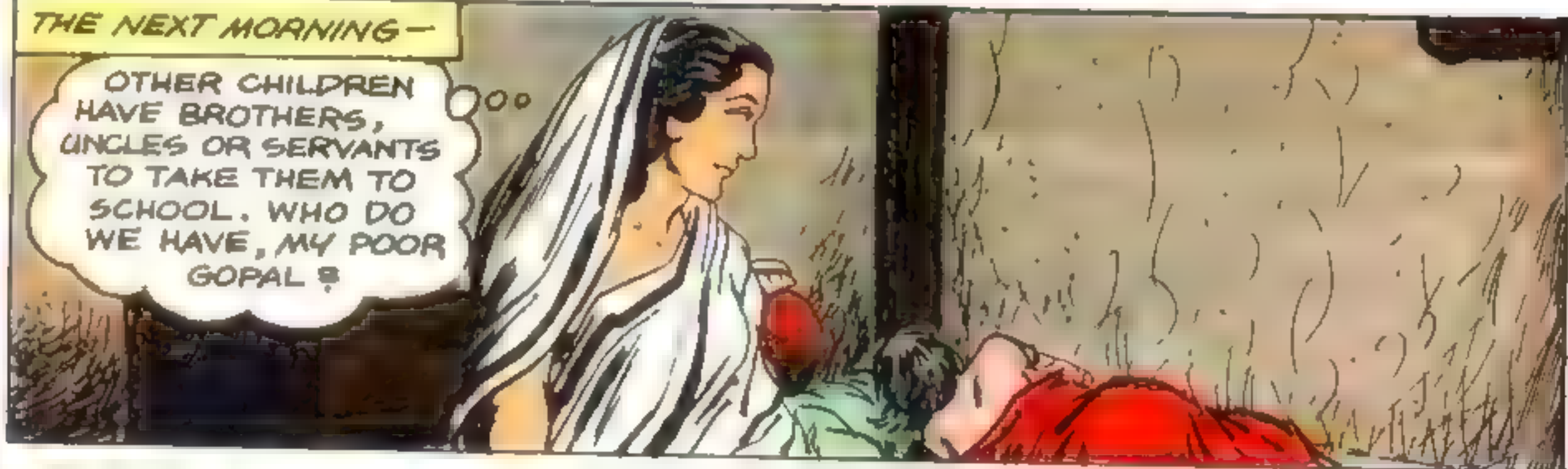
THAT NIGHT, GOPAL'S MOTHER WAS VERY WORRIED.



WHAT SHALL I DO ? I CAN- NOT GO WITH HIM EVERY DAY. THERE IS SO MUCH WORK TO DO.

THE NEXT MORNING—

OTHER CHILDREN HAVE BROTHERS, UNCLÉS OR SERVANTS TO TAKE THEM TO SCHOOL. WHO DO WE HAVE, MY POOR GOPAL ?



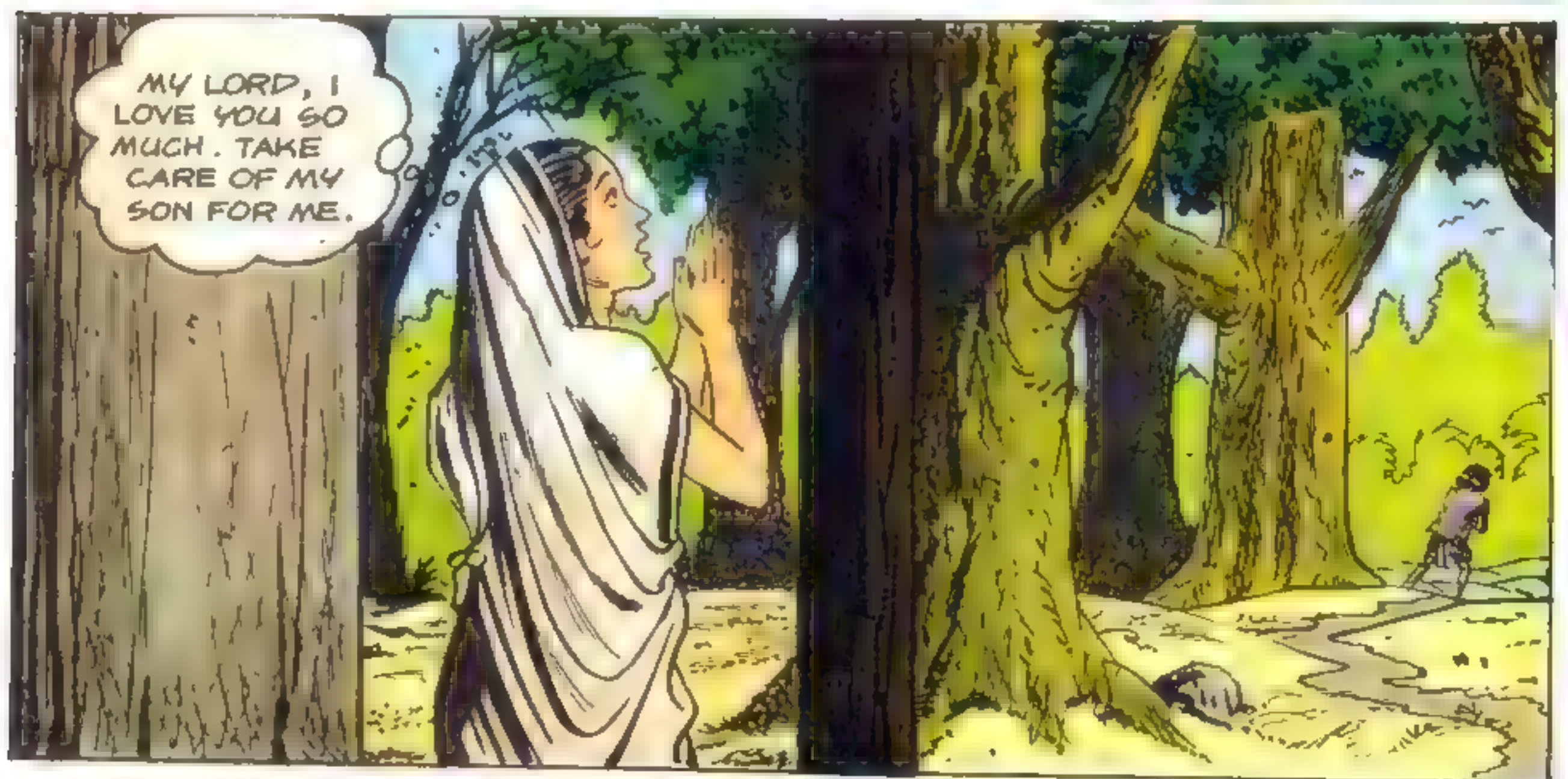
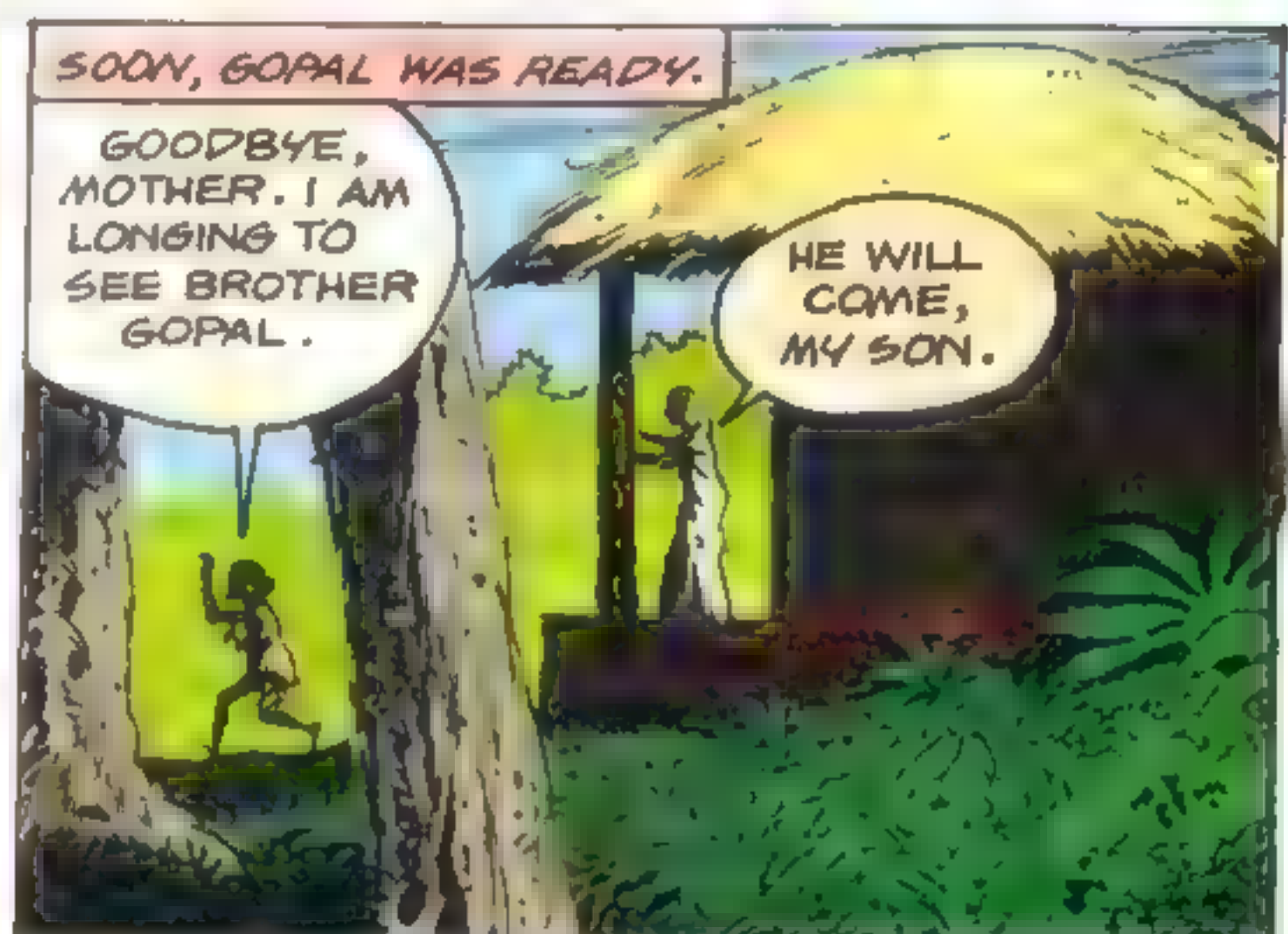
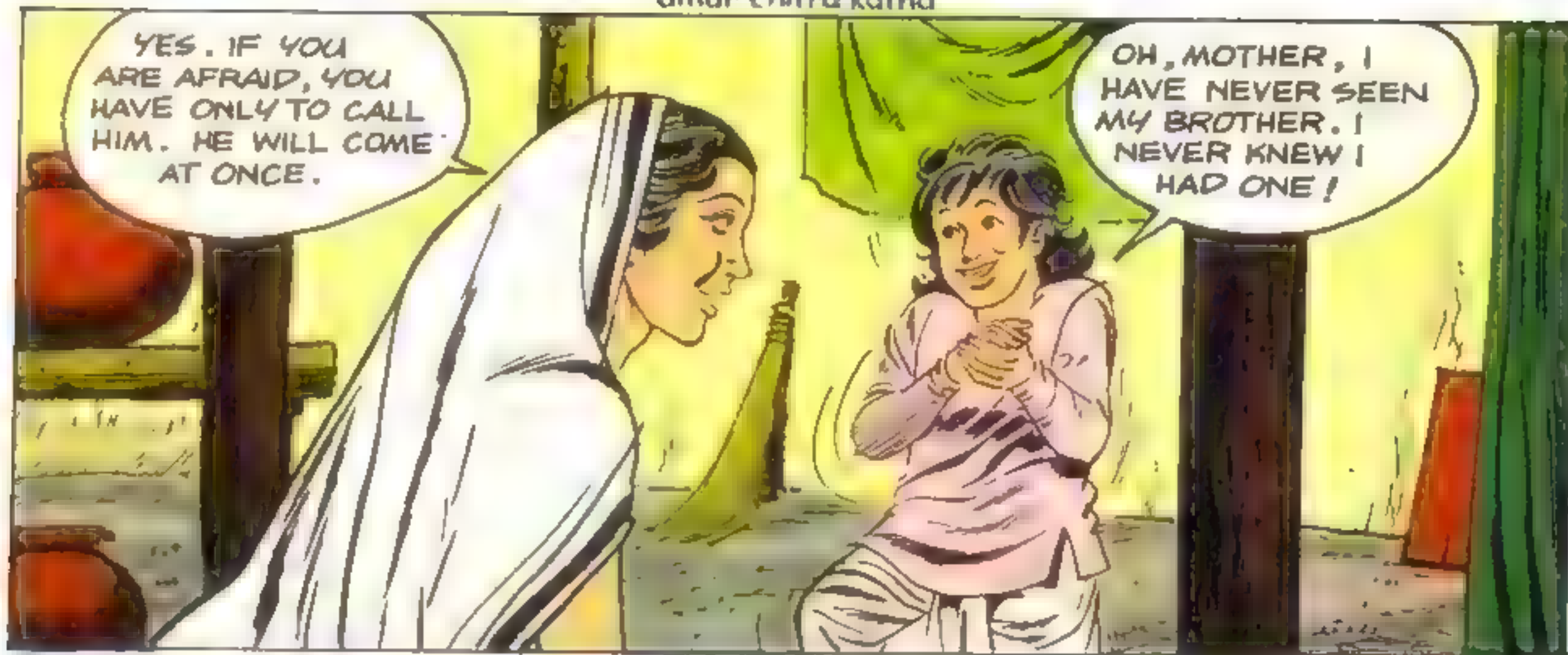
WHO DO WE HAVE ? YES, OF COURSE ! WE HAVE LORD KRISHNA ! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF HIM BEFORE ?



DEAR LORD, YOU ARE THE FATHER OF THE POOR. YOU PROTECT ALL. I KNOW YOU WILL PROTECT MY GOPAL.









AGAIN GOPAL CALLED OUT.

BROTHER
GOPAL,
WHERE ARE
YOU?



THERE WAS A RUSTLE IN THE BUSHES AND—

I AM
COMING,
LITTLE
BROTHER.

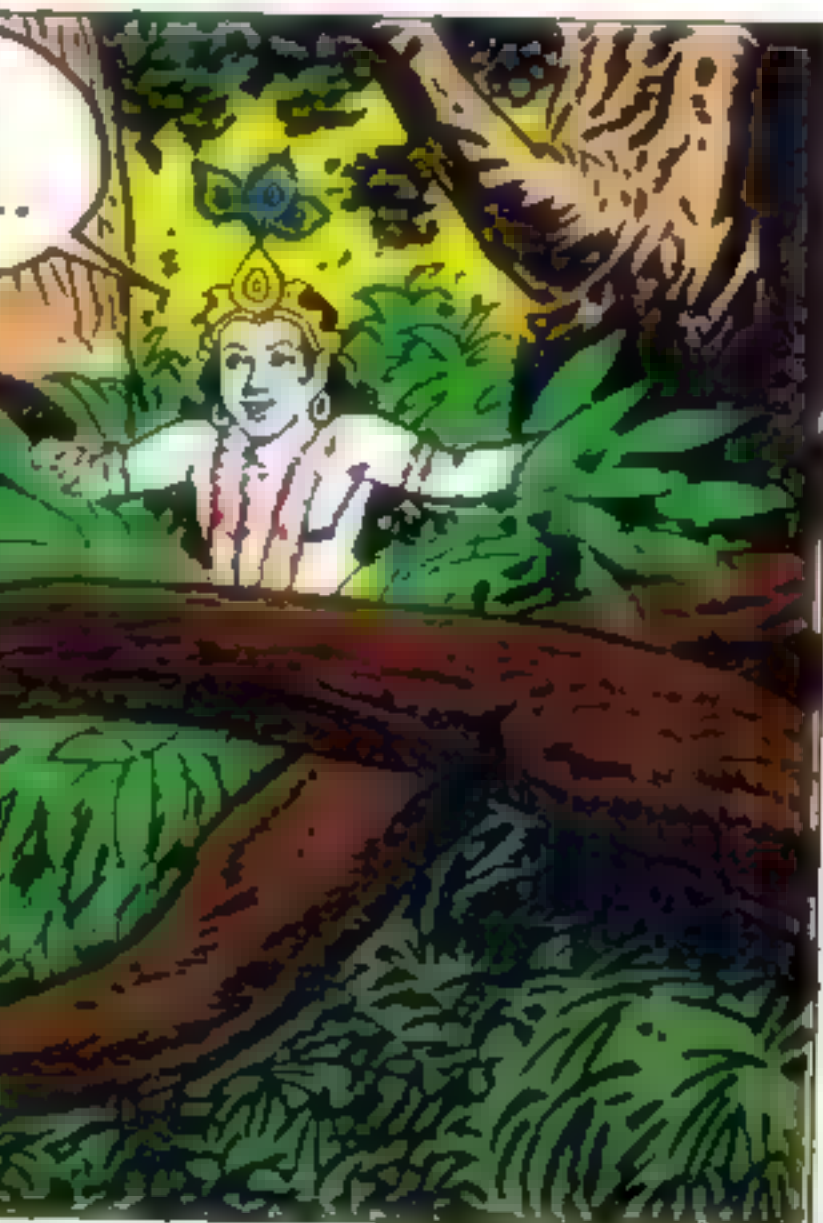
COME
QUICKLY, BRO-
THER. I AM
AFRAID.

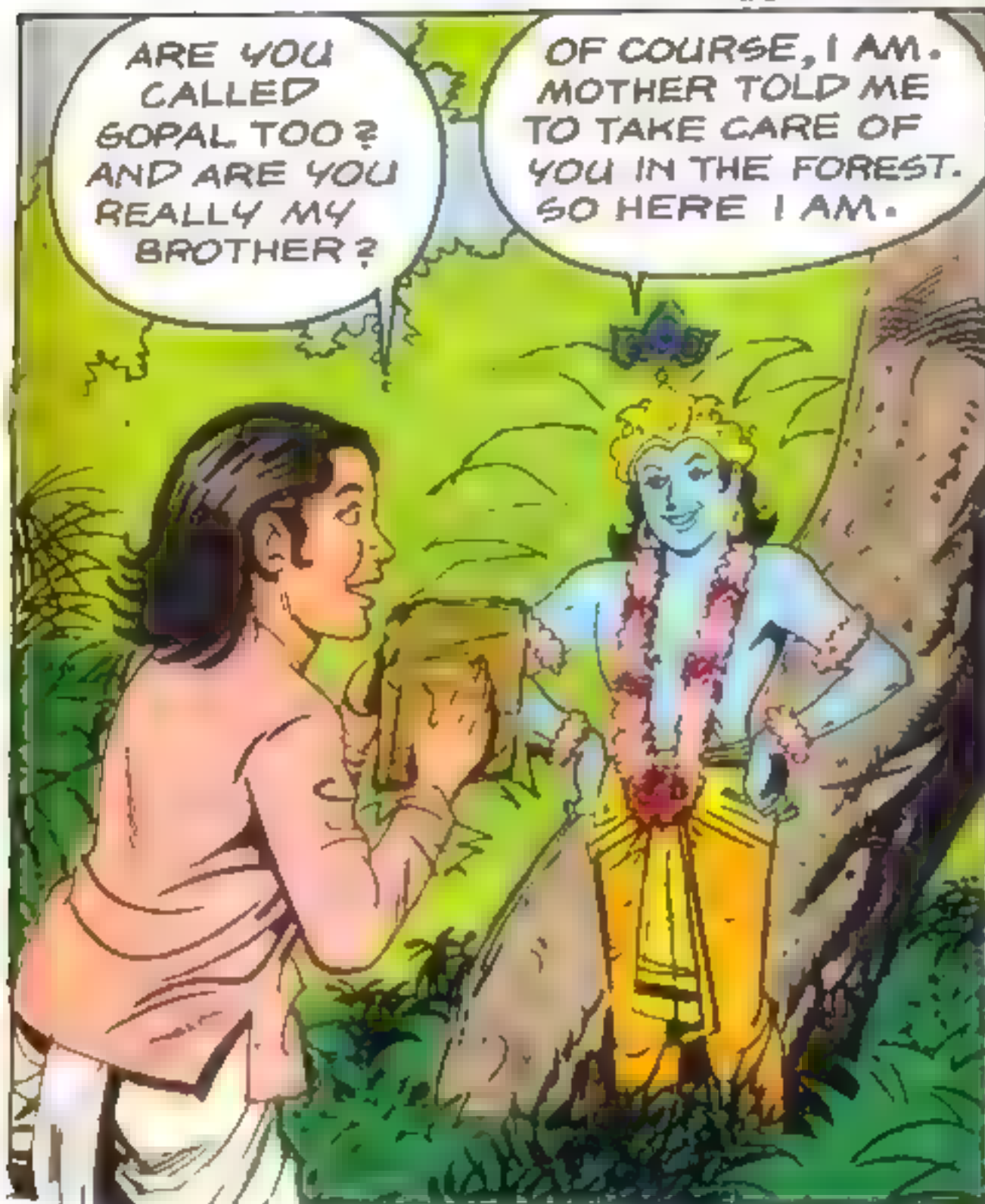


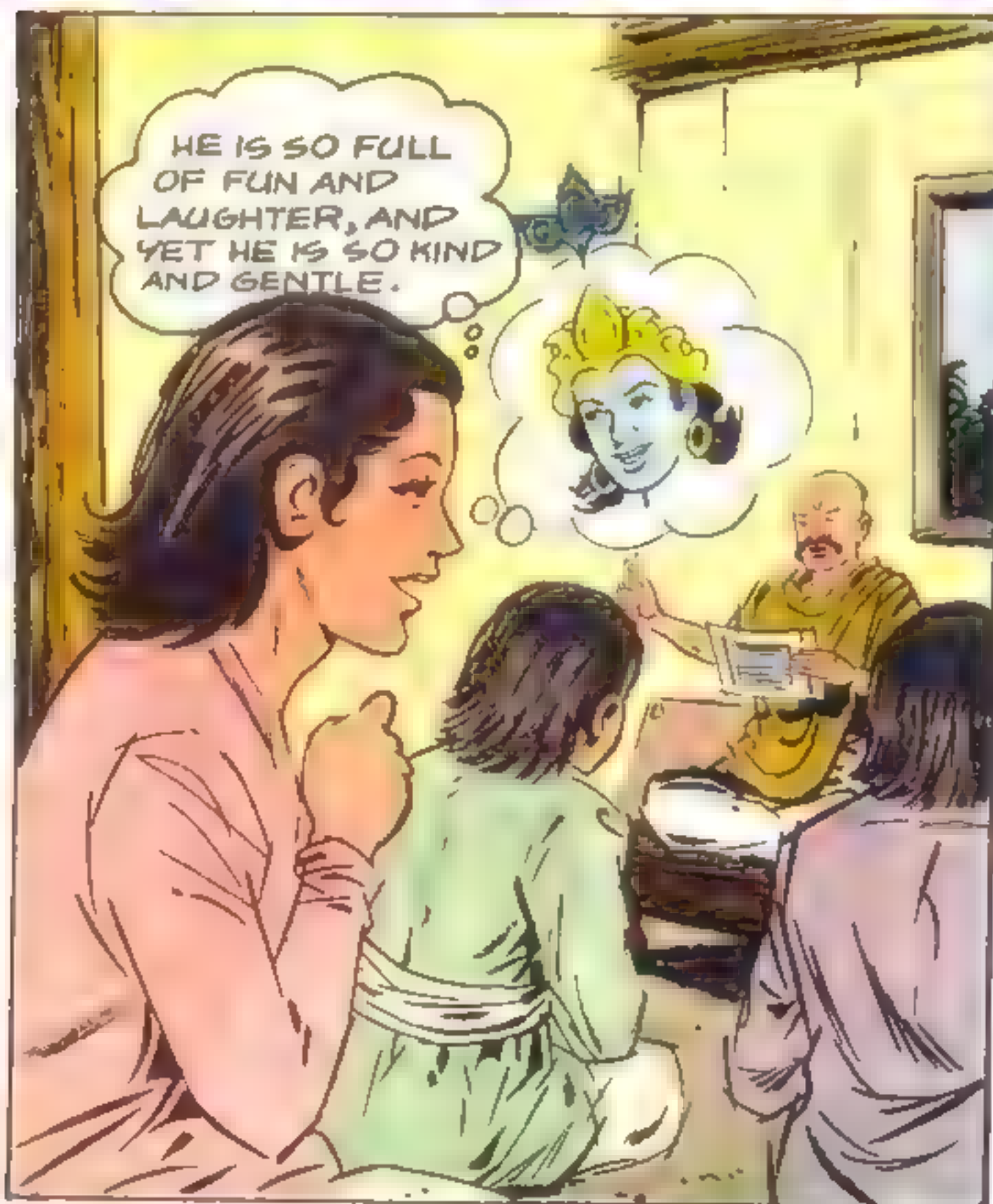
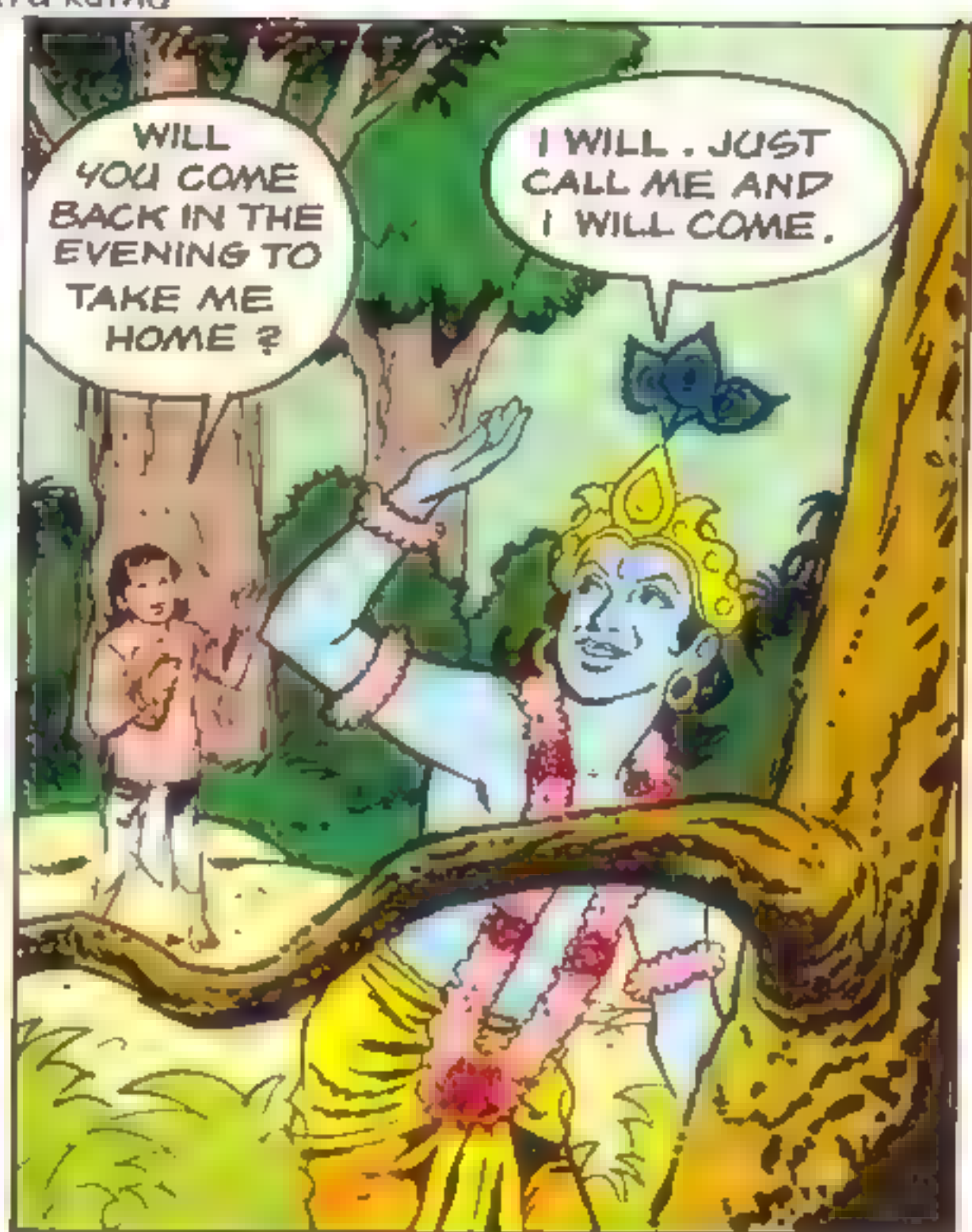
THE NEXT MOMENT —

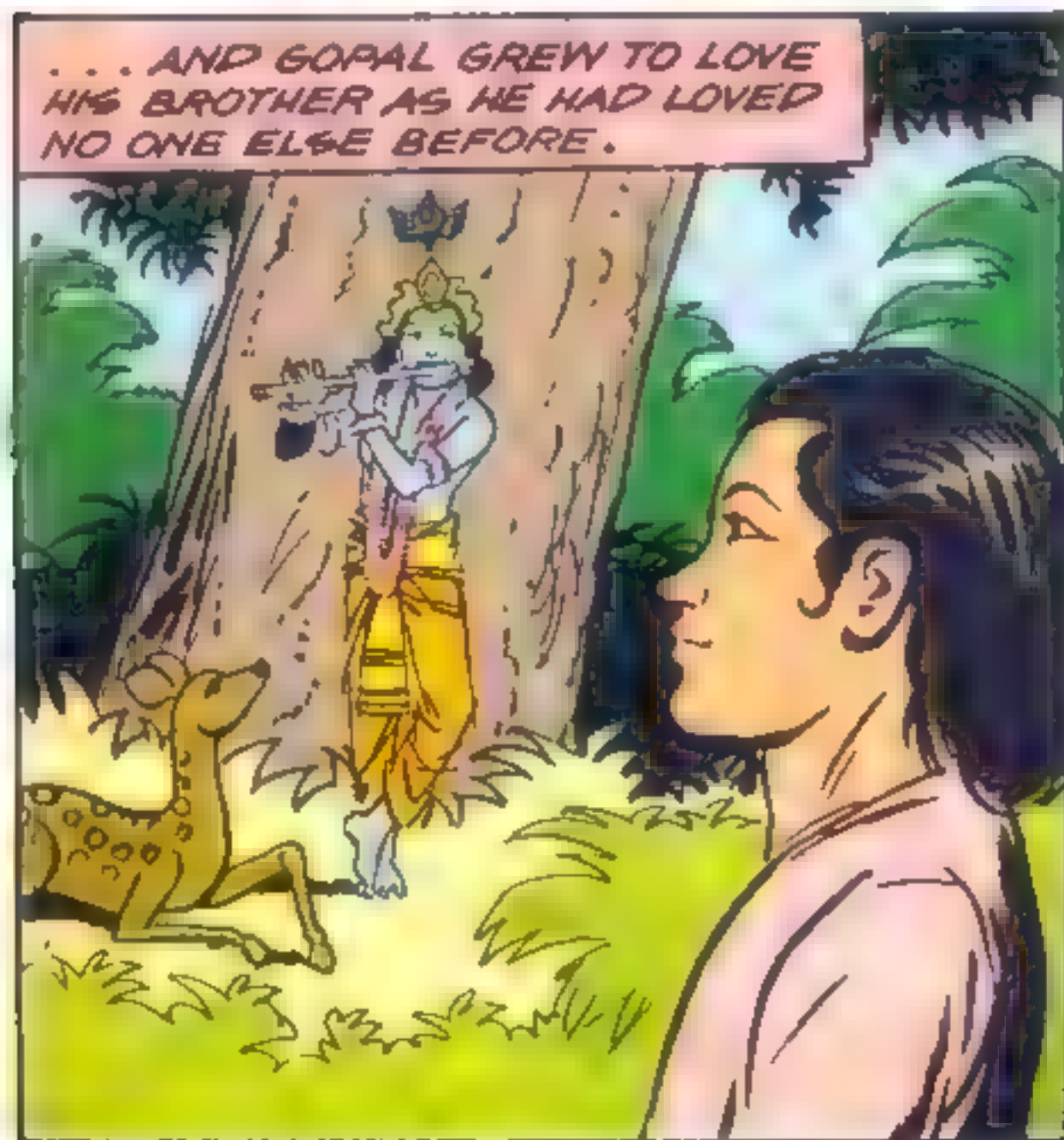
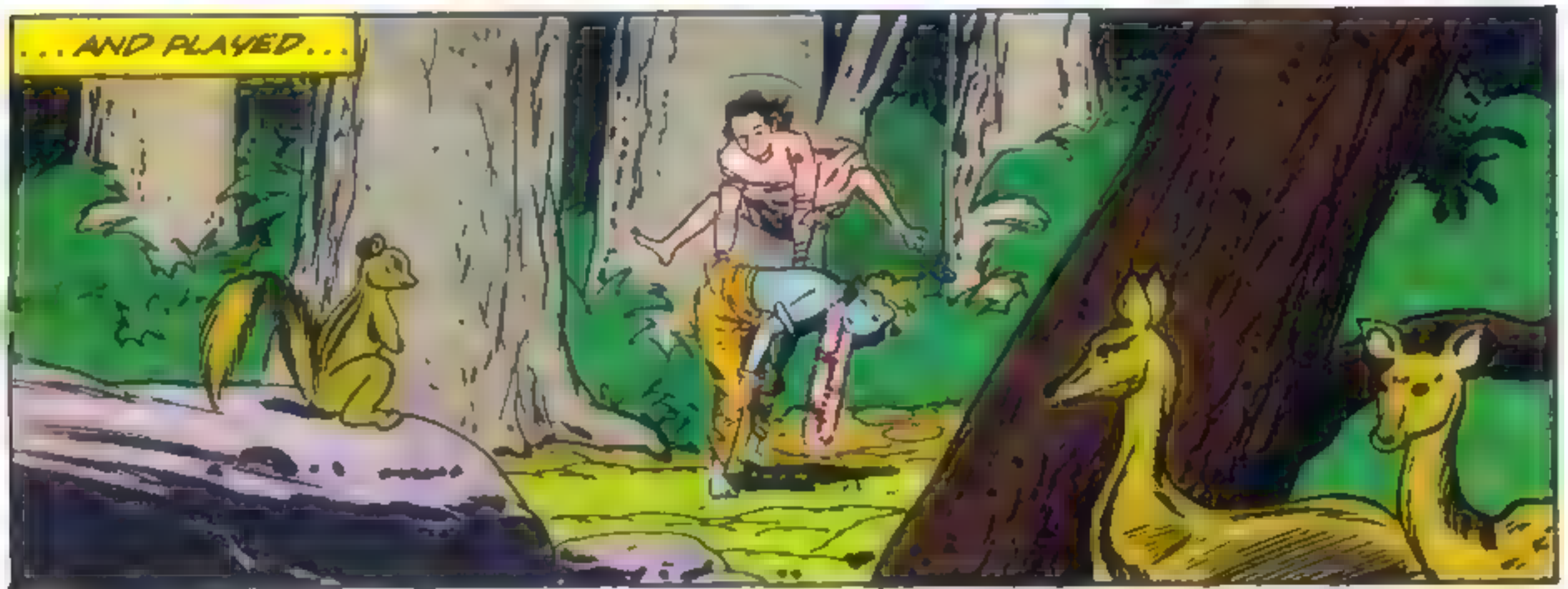
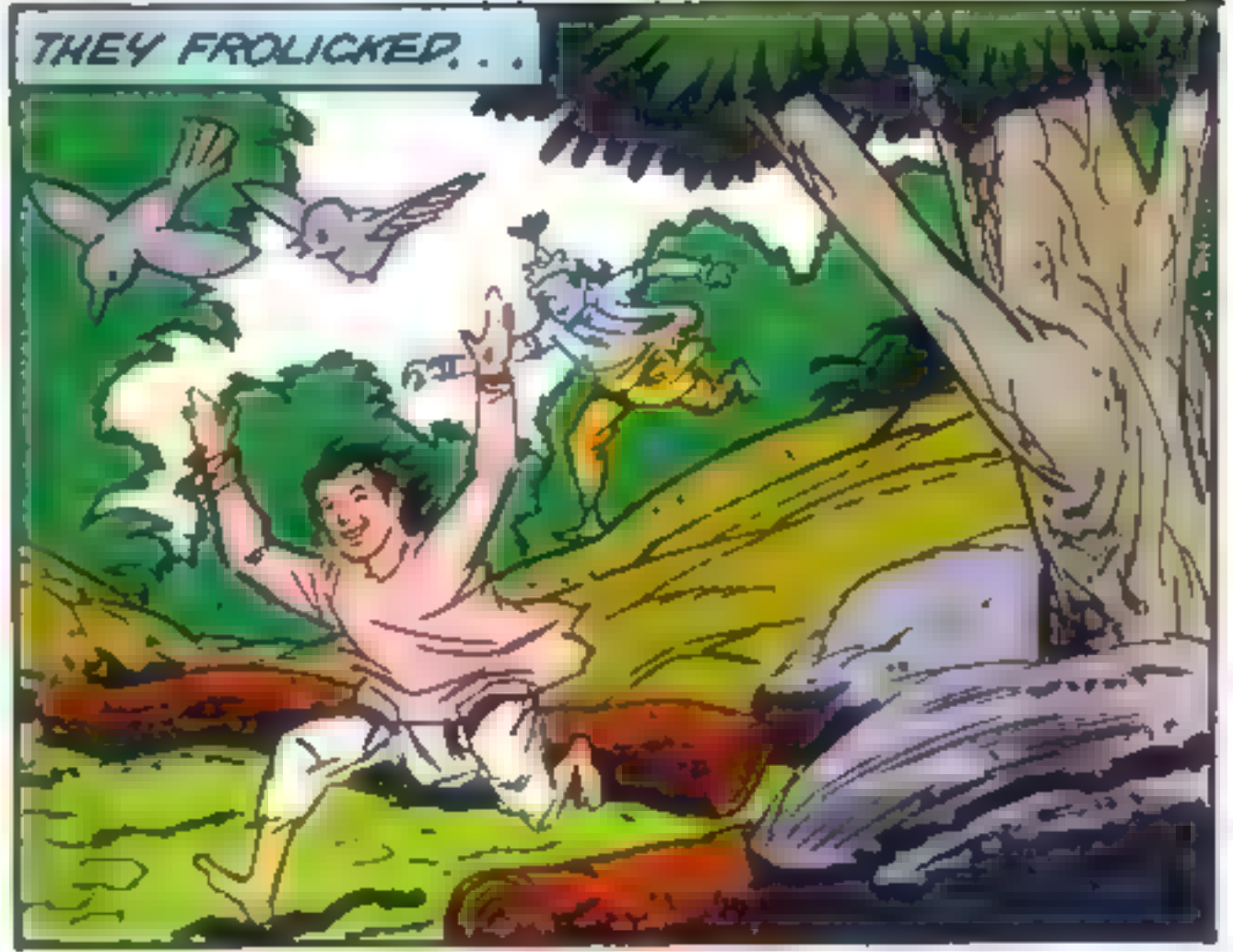
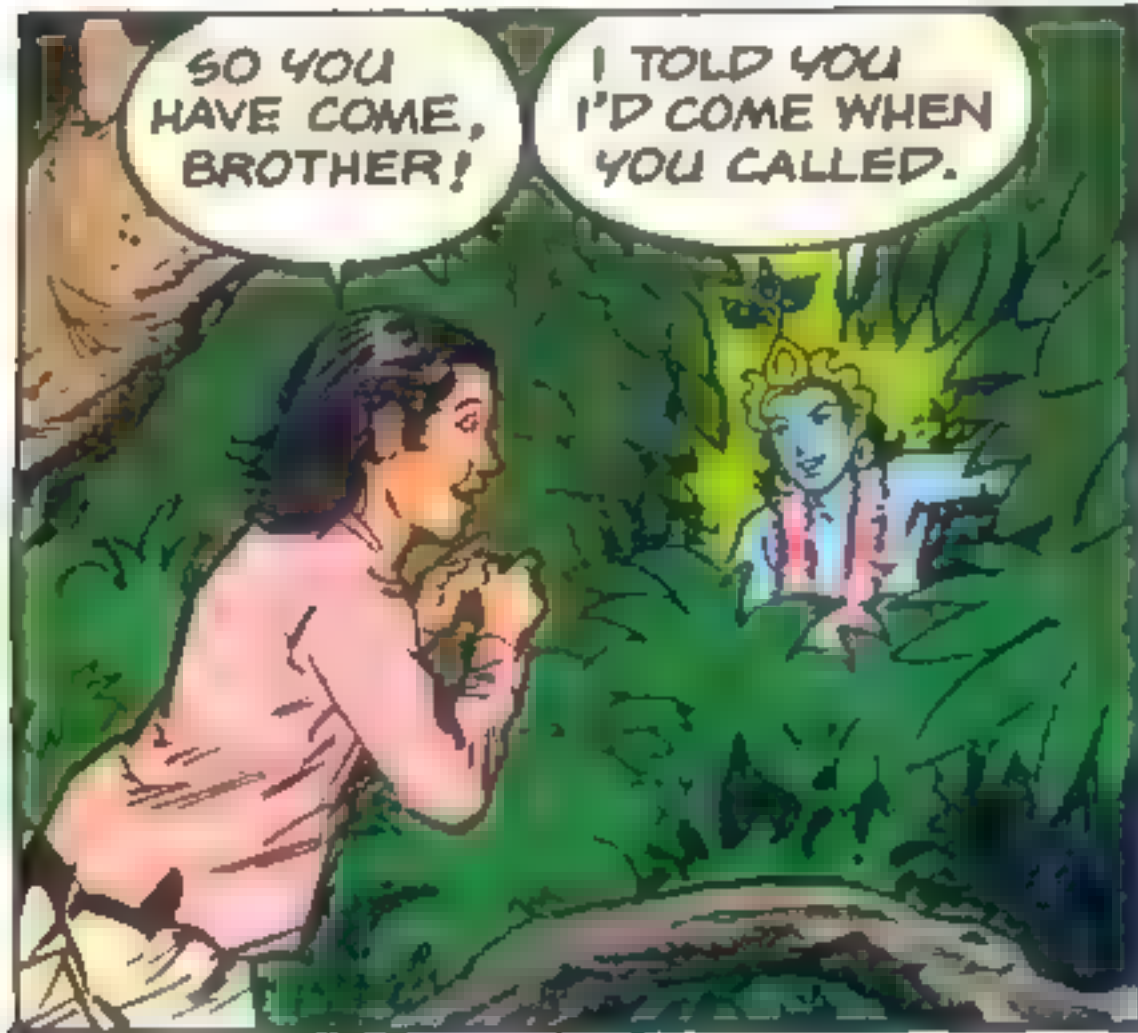
OH!

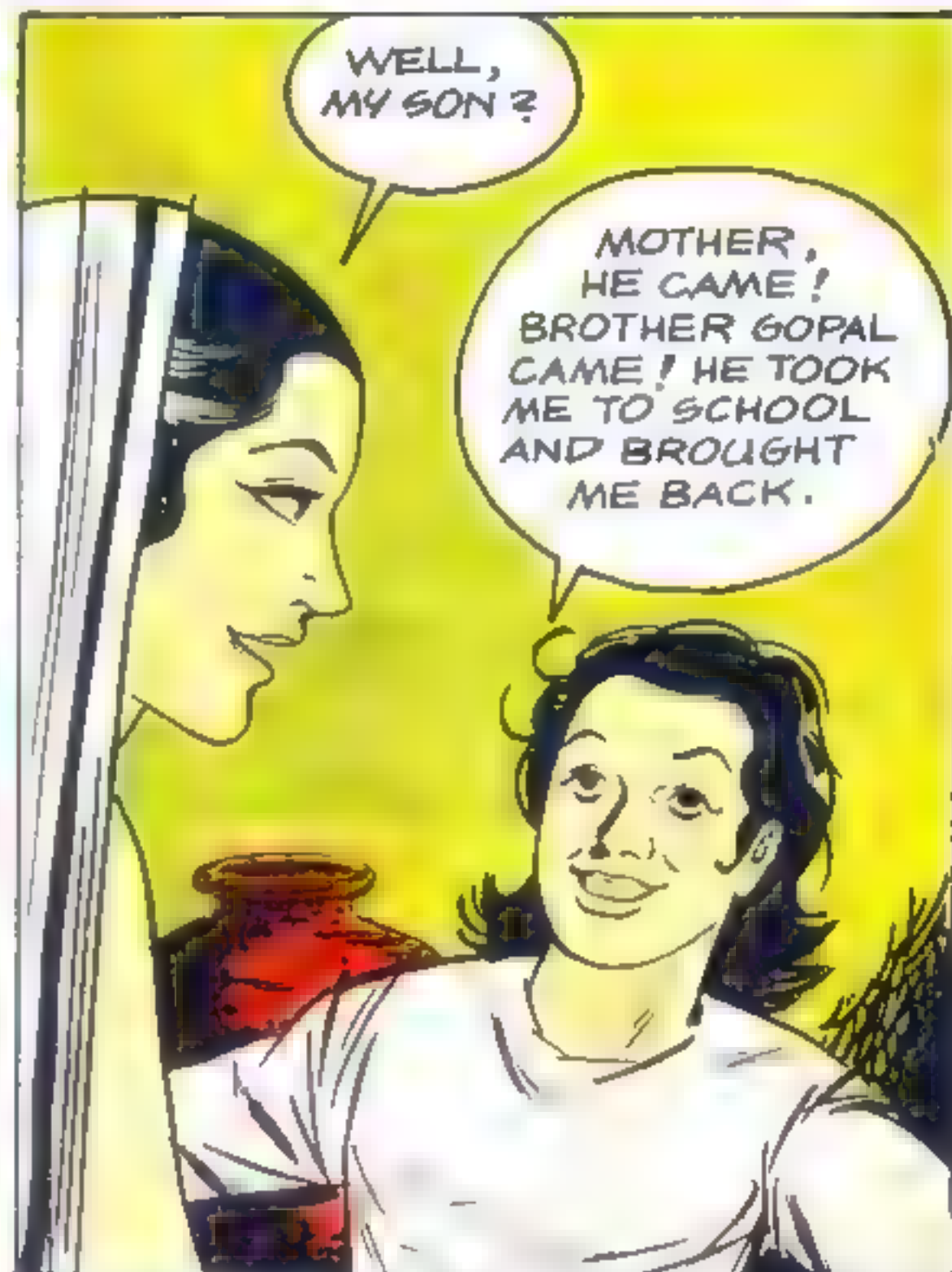
HERE
I AM,
GOPAL.



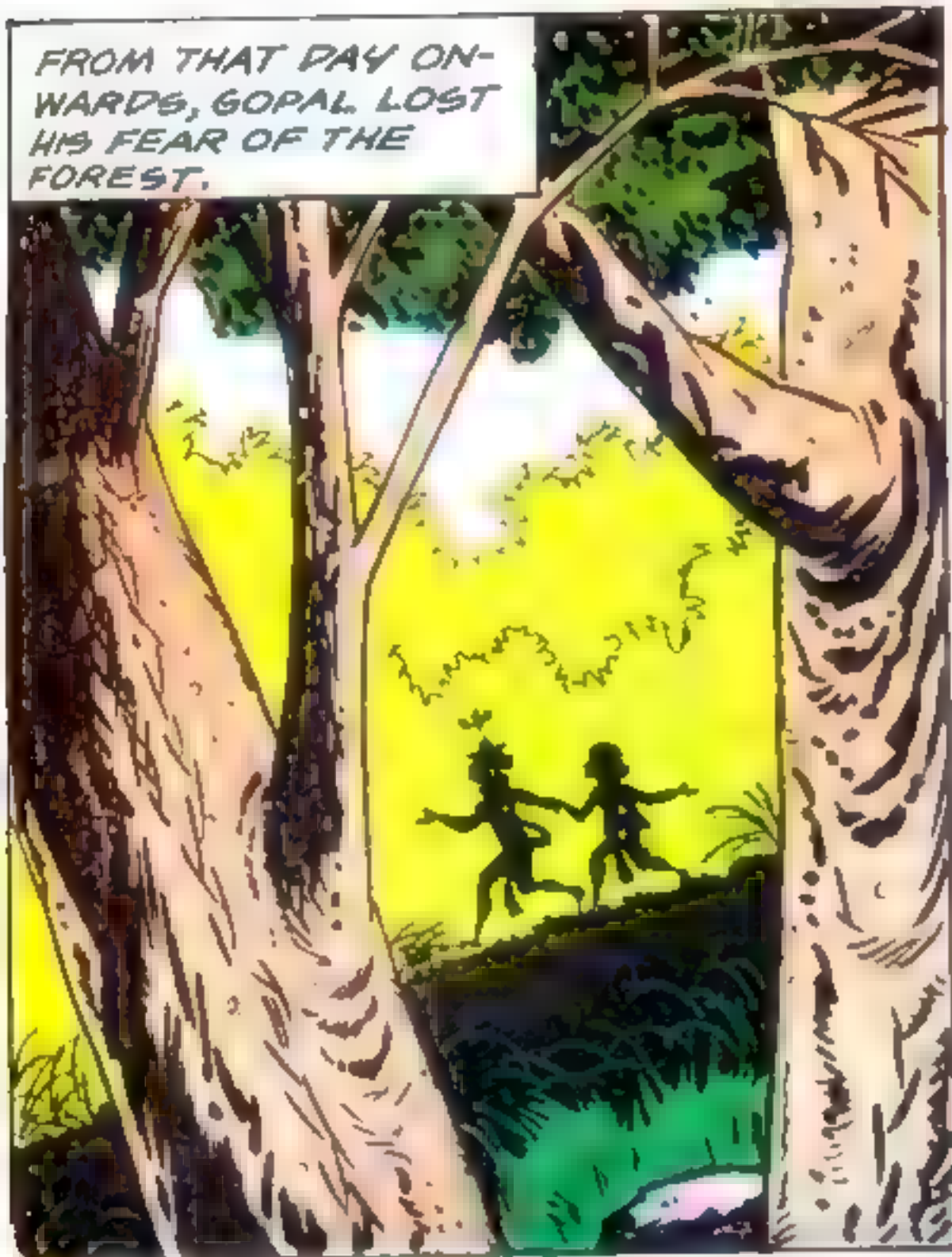








FROM THAT DAY ON-
WARDS, GOPAL LOST
HIS FEAR OF THE
FOREST.



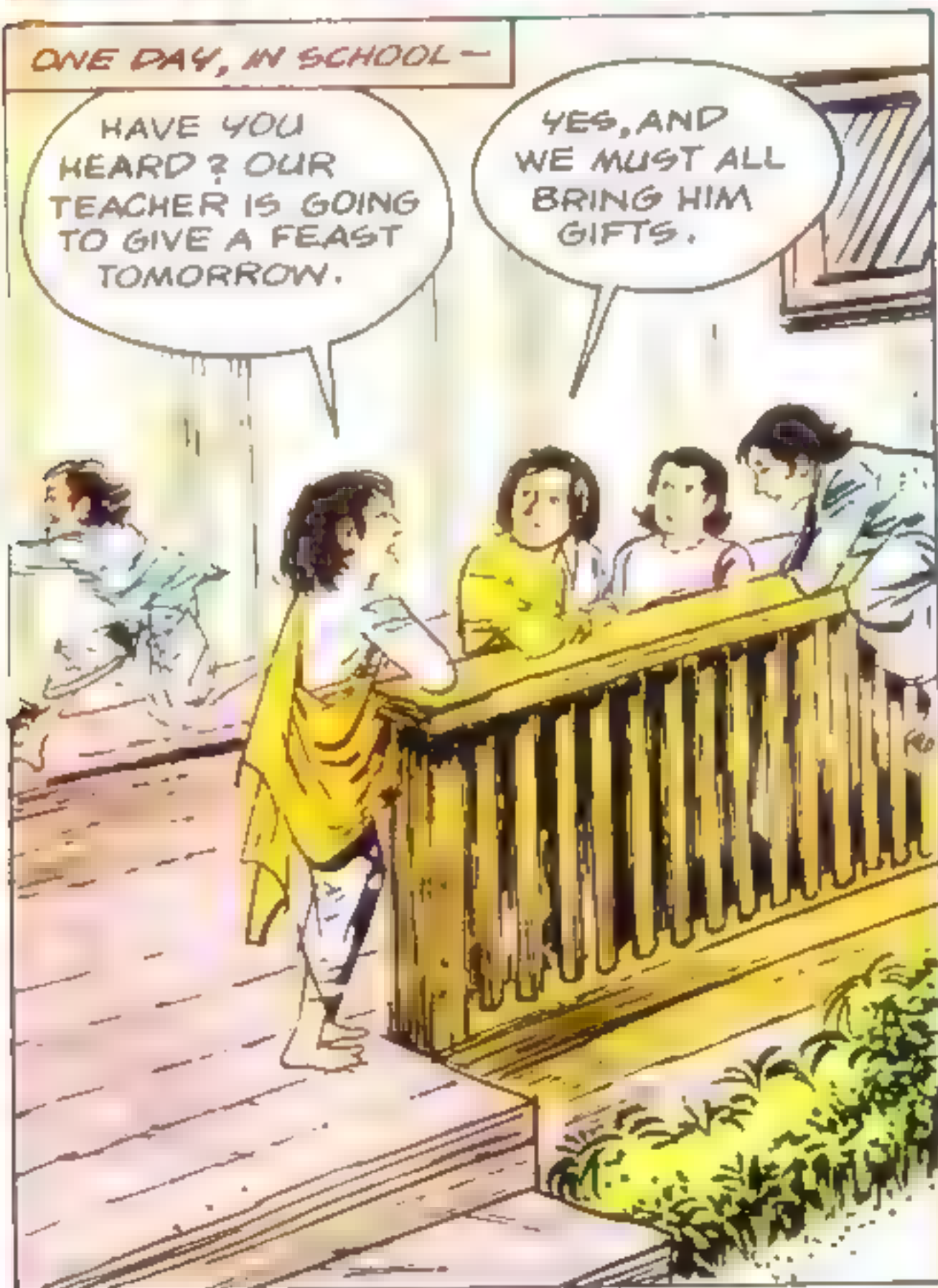
AND HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH THE
COWHERD BROUGHT A GLOW OF
HAPPINESS INTO HIS LIFE.



ONE DAY, IN SCHOOL —

HAVE YOU
HEARD? OUR
TEACHER IS GOING
TO GIVE A FEAST
TOMORROW.

YES, AND
WE MUST ALL
BRING HIM
GIFTS.



WHAT
ARE YOU
BRINGING
FOR HIM,
GOPAL?

I... I DON'T
KNOW. I'LL
HAVE TO ASK
MY MOTHER.





THAT EVENING, AT HOME —

WHY, GOPAL!
YOU LOOK
DEJECTED
TODAY. DIDN'T
YOUR BROTHER
COME?

HE CAME,
MOTHER.
IT'S NOT
THAT

WHAT IS
IT? TELL
ME.

OUR TEACHER
IS GIVING A
FEAST TOMORROW
AND ALL THE
BOYS ARE TAK-
ING HIM BEAUTI-
FUL GIFTS.
WHAT SHALL
I TAKE?

A LOOK OF PAIN CROSSED
THE POOR MOTHER'S FACE.

WE HAVE
NOTHING AT
ALL. WHAT
GIFT CAN
WE OFFER?

BUT IT WAS ONLY FOR A
MOMENT.

MY CHILD,
ASK YOUR
BROTHER.
HE WILL
HELP YOU.

I WILL, MOTHER.
BROTHER GOPAL
WILL CERTAINLY
THINK OF SOME-
THING.

BOTH FACES BRIGHTENED AT THE THOUGHT OF KRISHNA.

THE NEXT DAY—

BROTHER,
MY TEACHER IS
GIVING A FEAST TODAY.
CAN YOU GIVE ME A
GIFT TO TAKE FOR
HIM?

WHAT CAN I
GIVE YOU, GOPAL?
I AM ONLY A POOR
COWHERD.



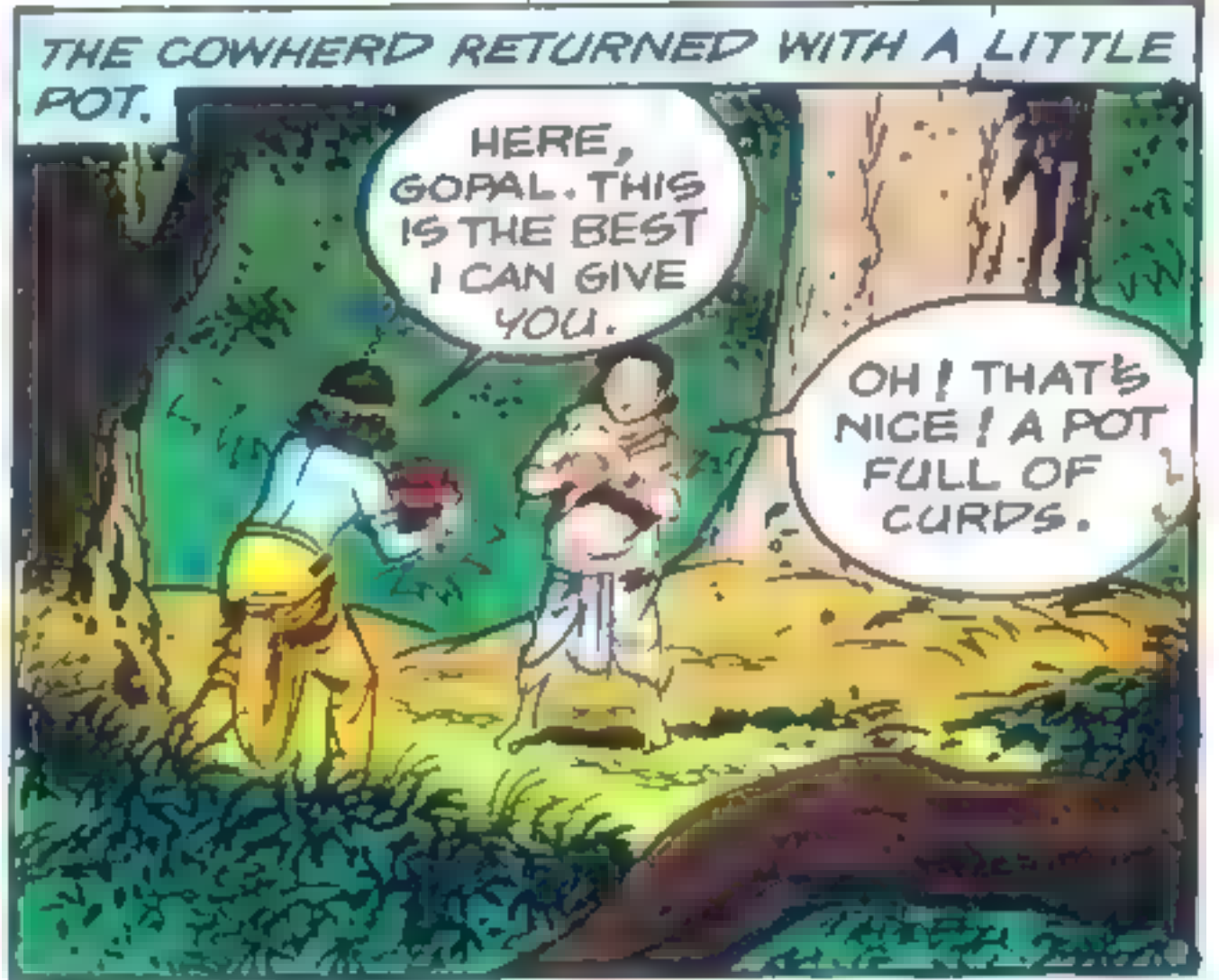
BUT WAIT, I
HAVE AN IDEA.
I'LL BE BACK
IN A MINUTE.



THE COWHERD RETURNED WITH A LITTLE
POT.

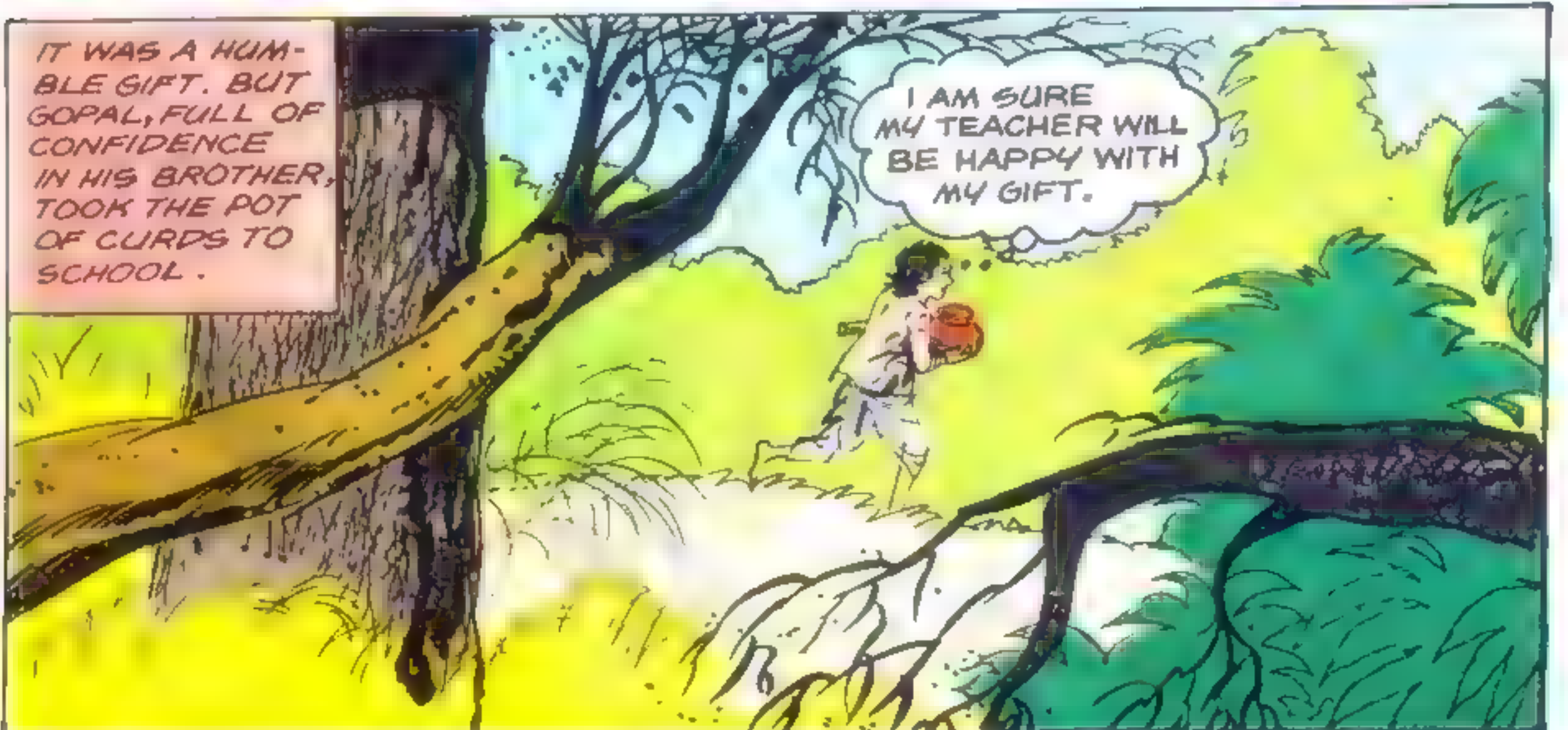
HERE,
GOPAL. THIS
IS THE BEST
I CAN GIVE
YOU.

OH! THAT'S
NICE! A POT
FULL OF
CURDS.

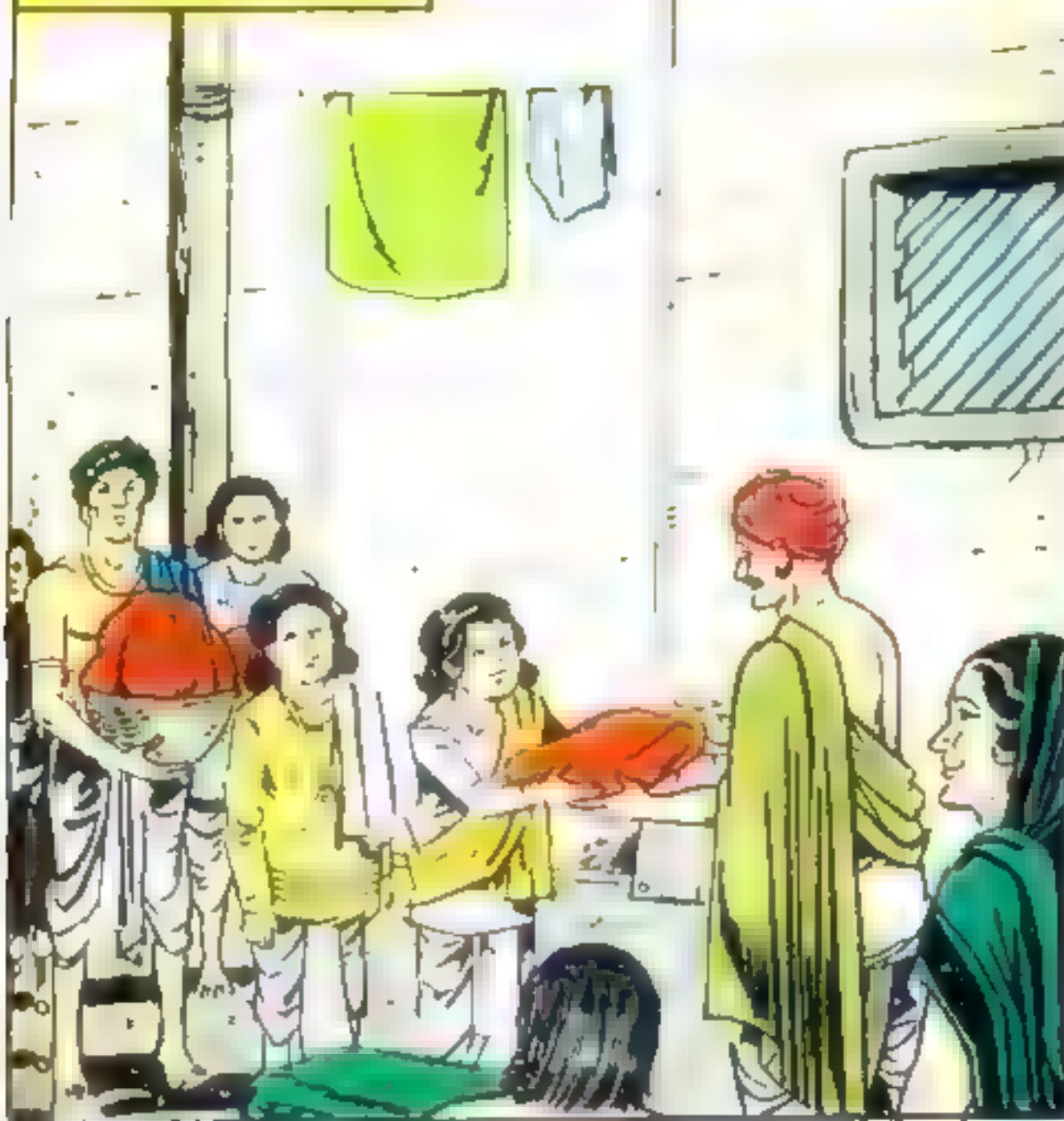


IT WAS A HUM-
BLE GIFT. BUT
GOPAL, FULL OF
CONFIDENCE
IN HIS BROTHER,
TOOK THE POT
OF CURDS TO
SCHOOL.

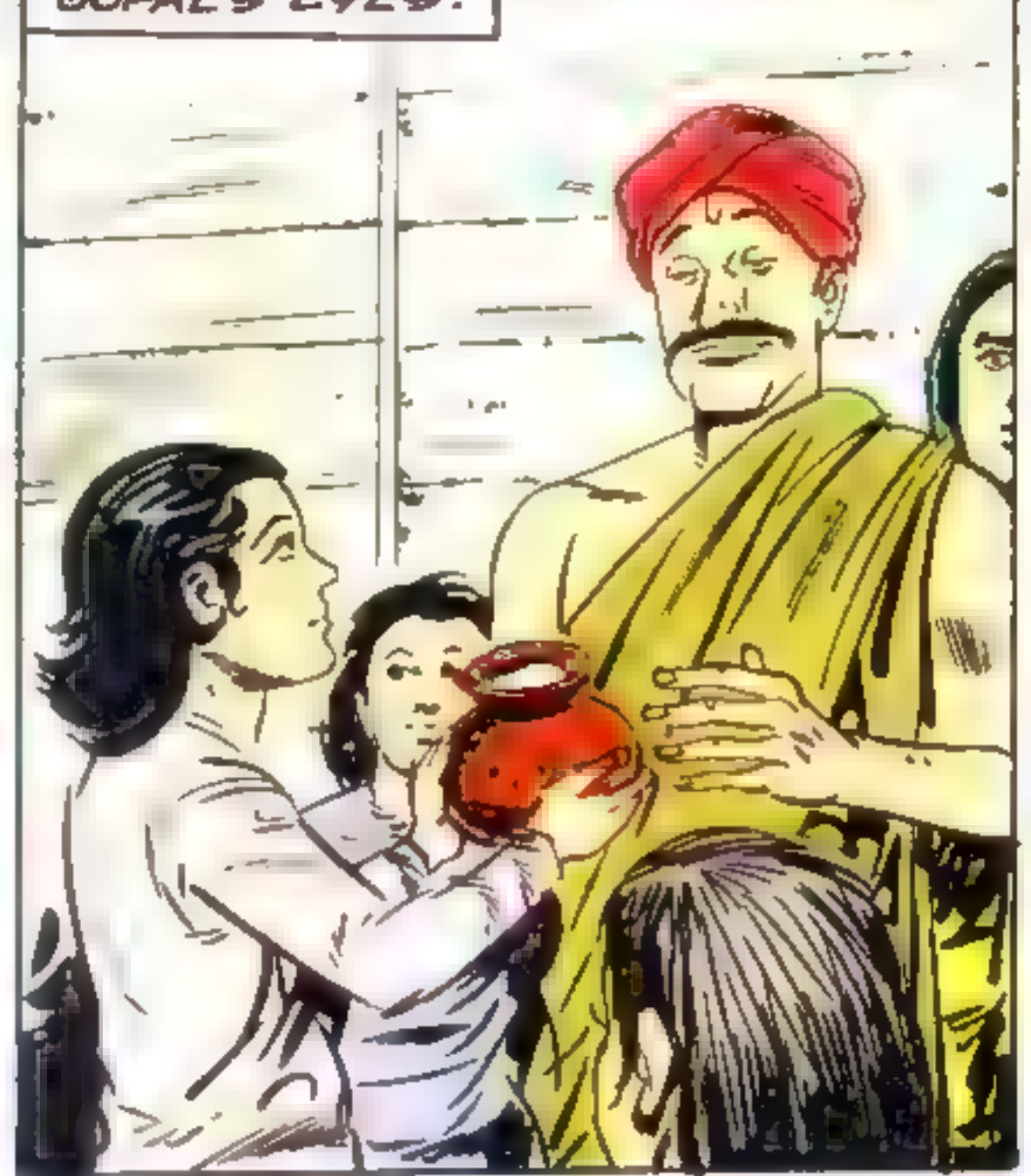
I AM SURE
MY TEACHER WILL
BE HAPPY WITH
MY GIFT.



AT SCHOOL, THE CHILDREN BEGAN TO OFFER THEIR GIFTS TO THE TEACHER AND HIS WIFE.



WHEN GOPAL'S TURN CAME, THE TEACHER TOOK THE POT A LITTLE COLDLY. TEARS WELLED UP IN GOPAL'S EYES.



SEEING HIS TEARS, THE TEACHER REGRETTED HIS COLDNESS.

THESE CURDS LOOK VERY TASTY. THANK YOU, MY CHILD.



THE CURDS WERE SERVED DURING THE FEAST.

THE CURDS ARE DELICIOUS! PLEASE GIVE ME SOME MORE.

FOR ME, TOO!

AND ME!



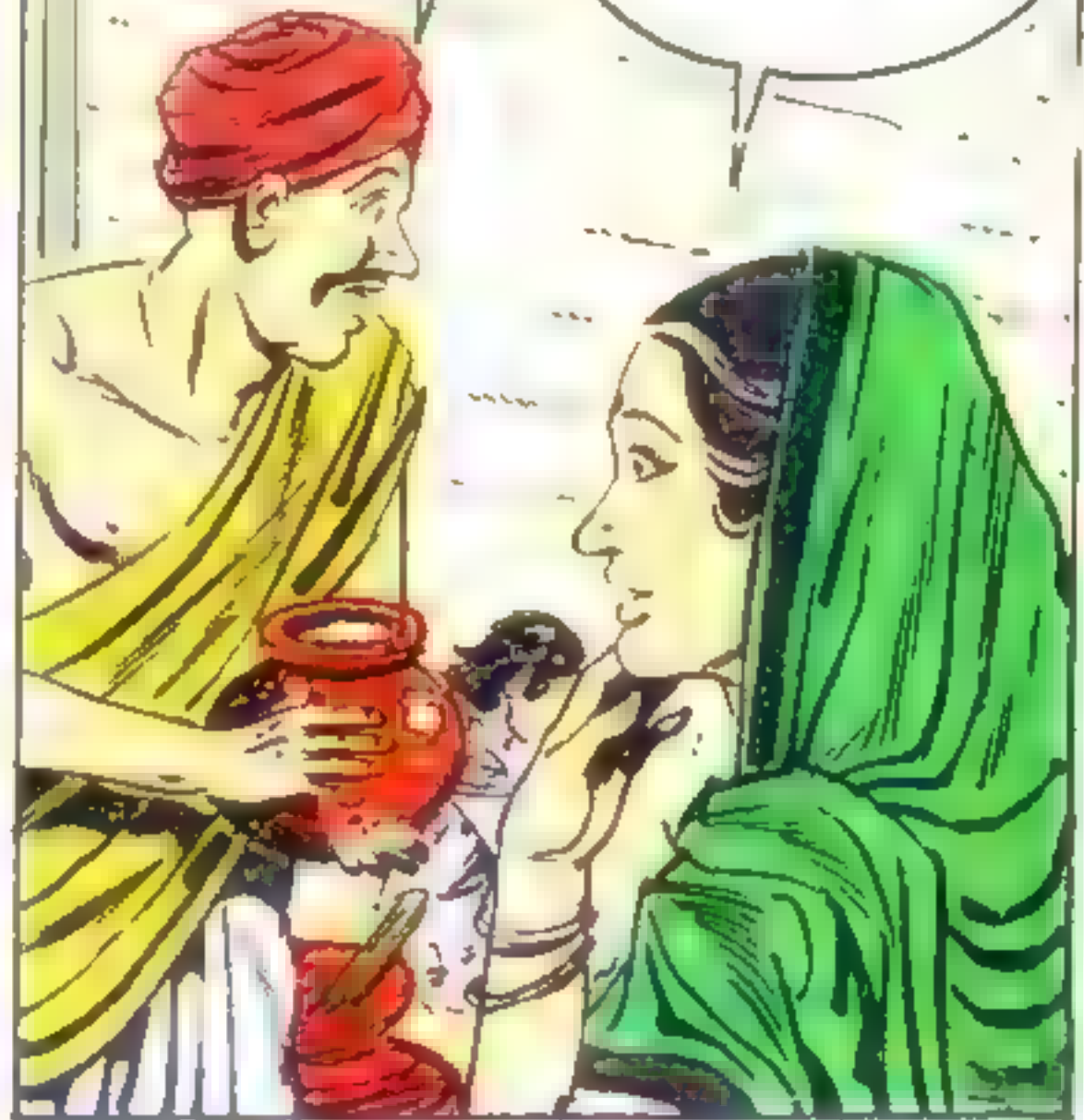
THE TEACHER SERVED THE CHILDREN AGAIN AND AGAIN.

I CAN'T UNDER-
STAND IT! THE POT
SHOULD HAVE BEEN
EMPTY BY NOW.



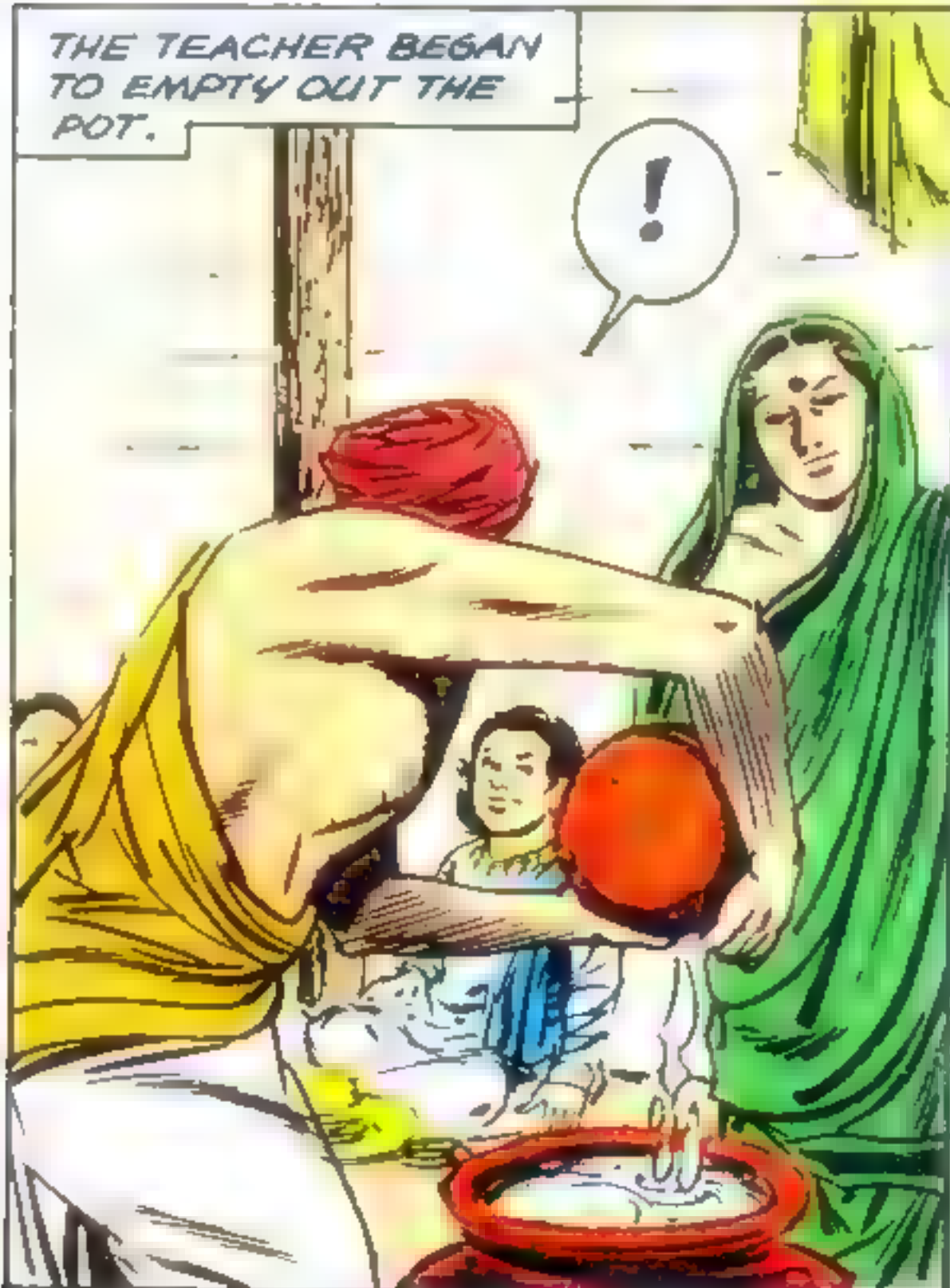
I HAVE SERVED
EVERYONE SEVERAL
HELPINGS OF CURDS.
YET THERE IS MORE
LEFT. THE MORE I
SERVE, THE MORE
THERE IS.

SO MUCH
FROM SUCH
A SMALL POT?
WHY DON'T WE
EMPTY WHAT'S
LEFT INTO
ANOTHER DISH?



THE TEACHER BEGAN
TO EMPTY OUT THE
POT.

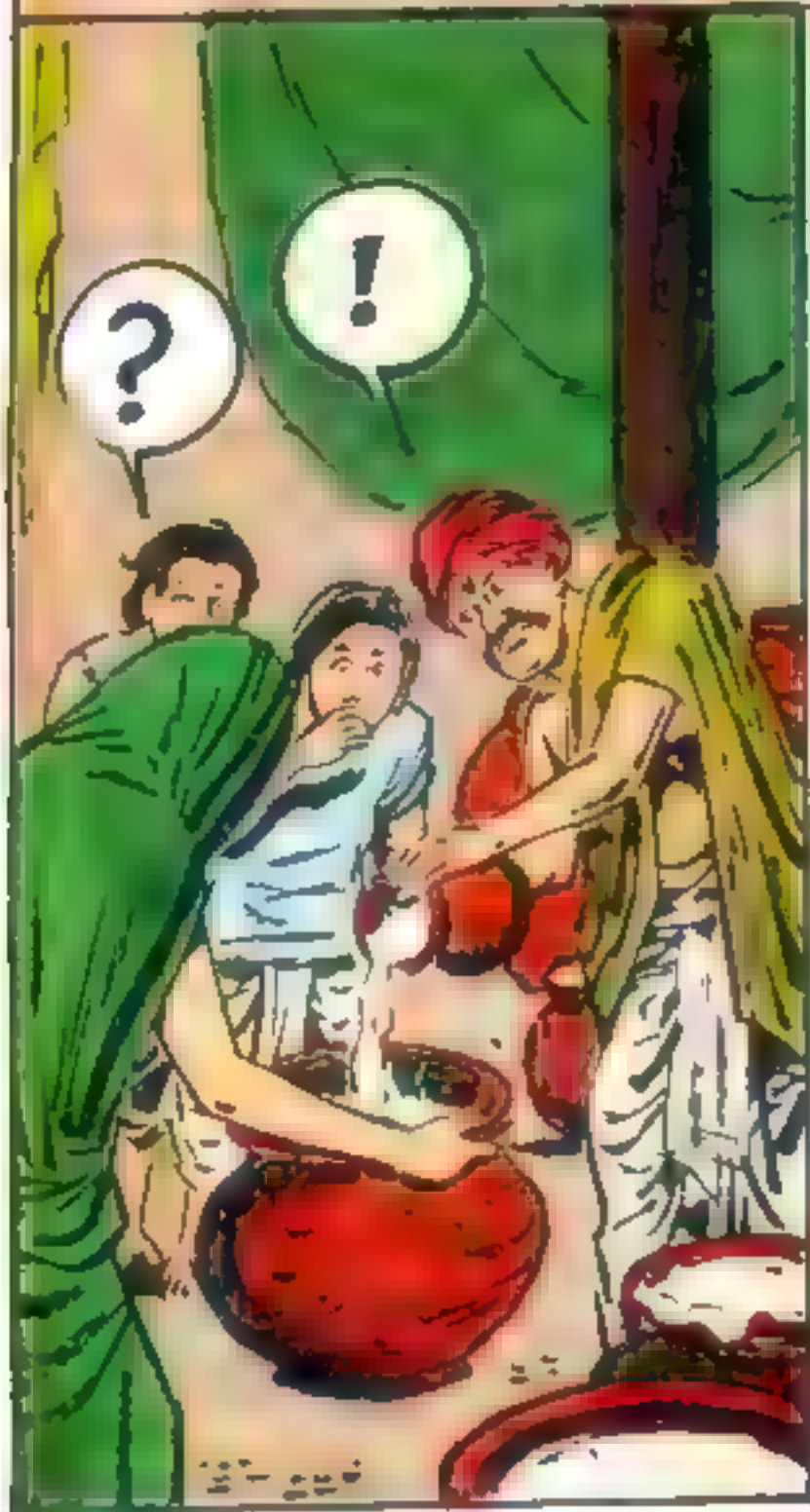
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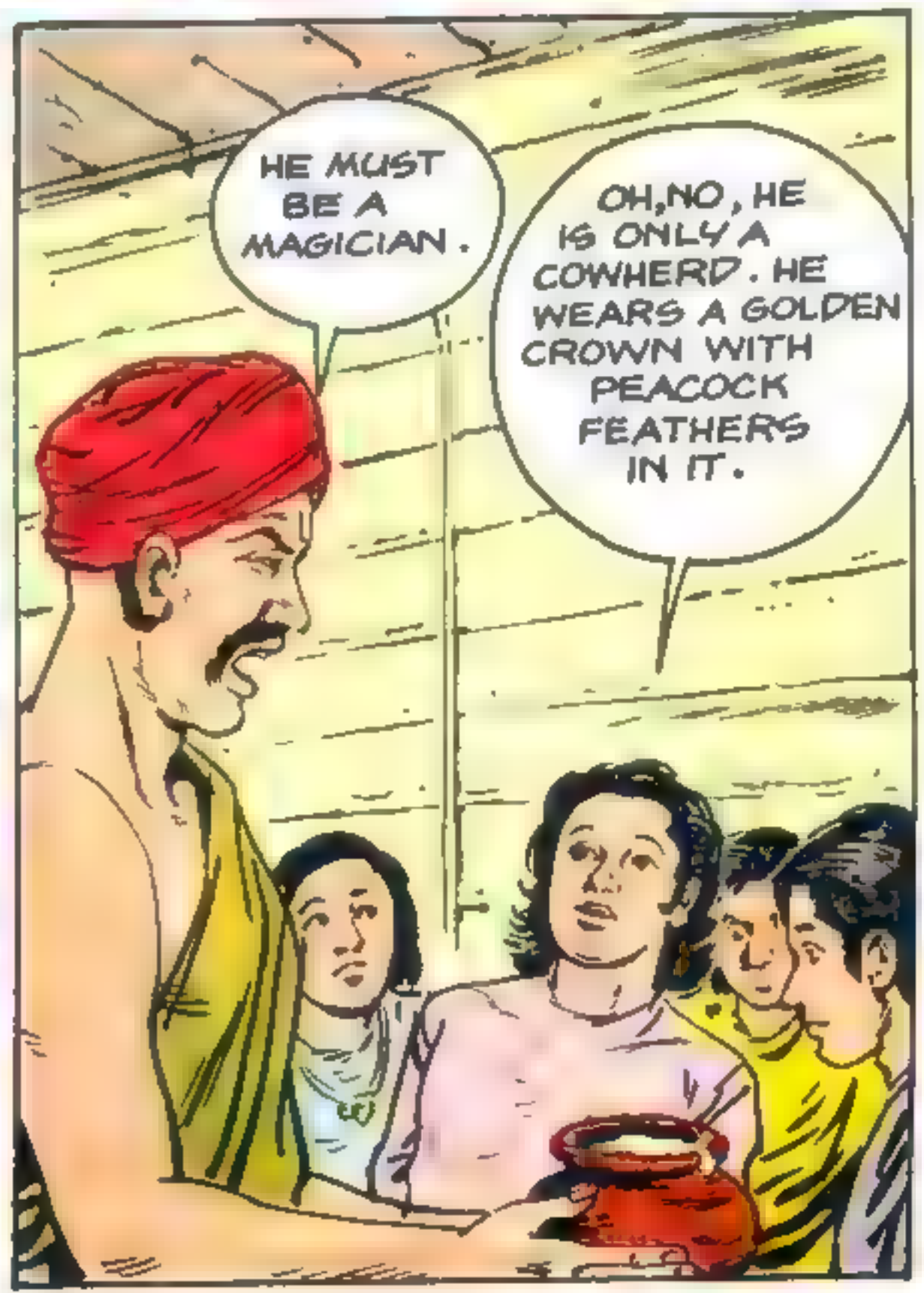
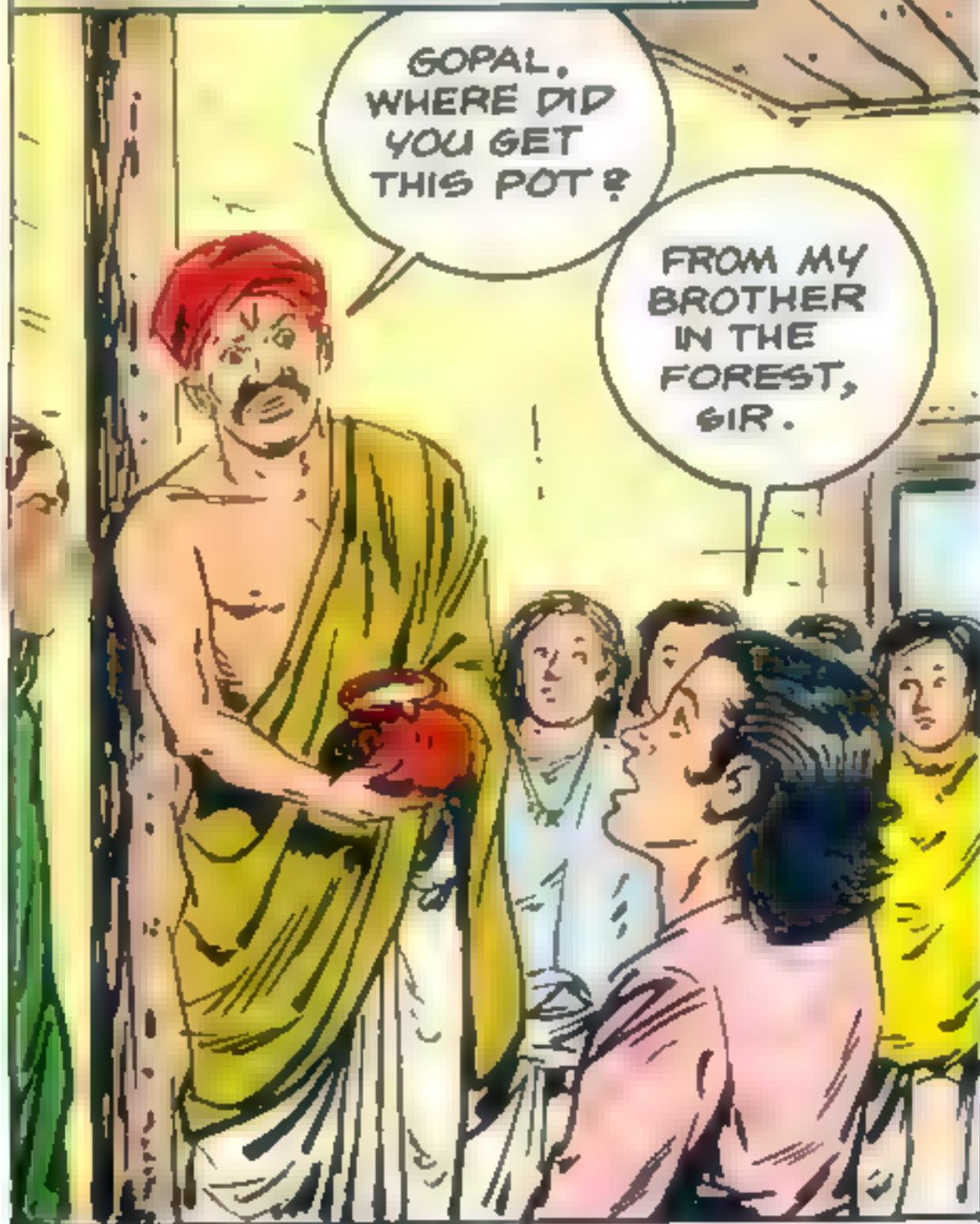
WHAT IS
THIS? THE
POT IS STILL
FULL?
IMPOSSIBLE!

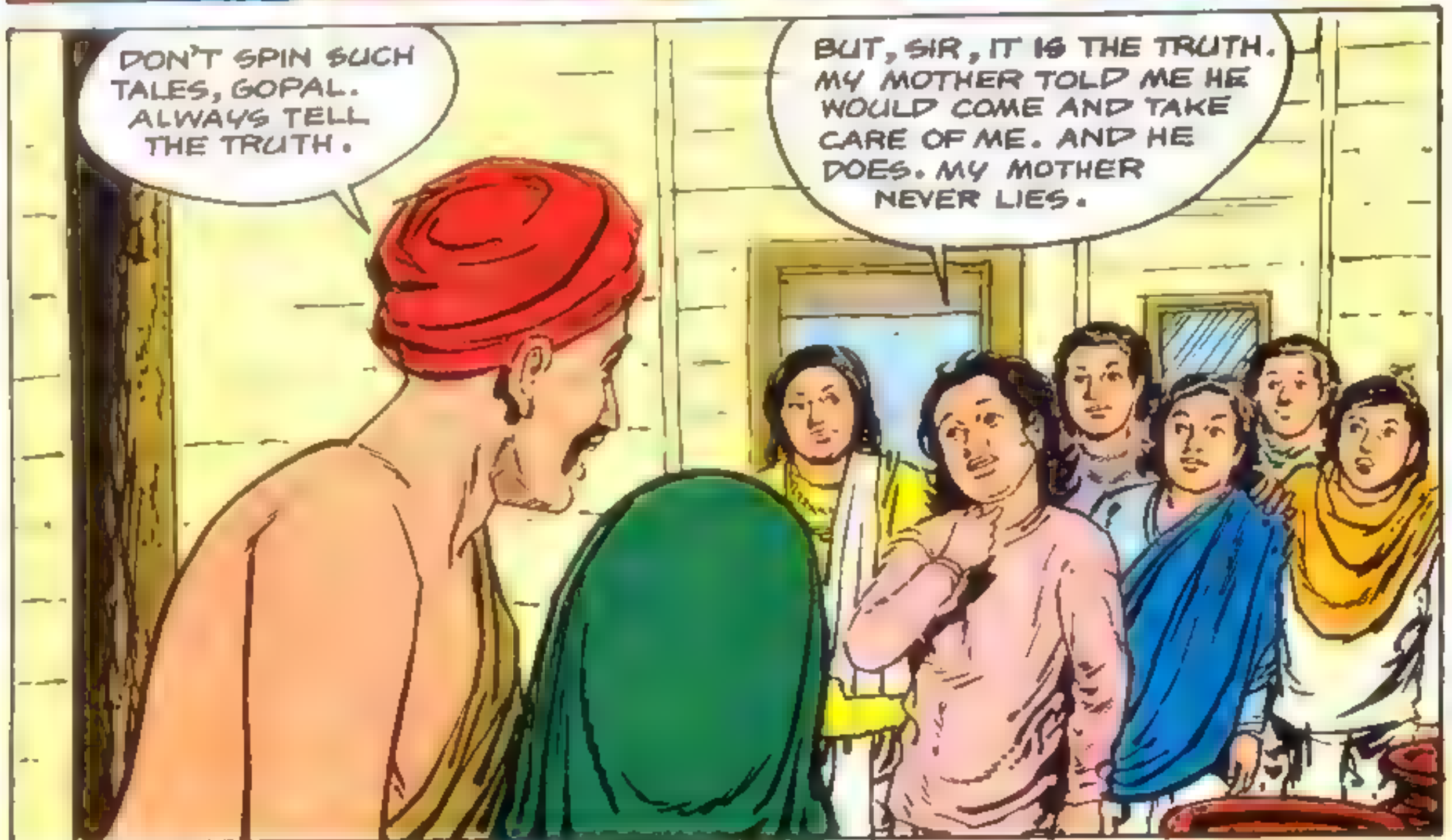
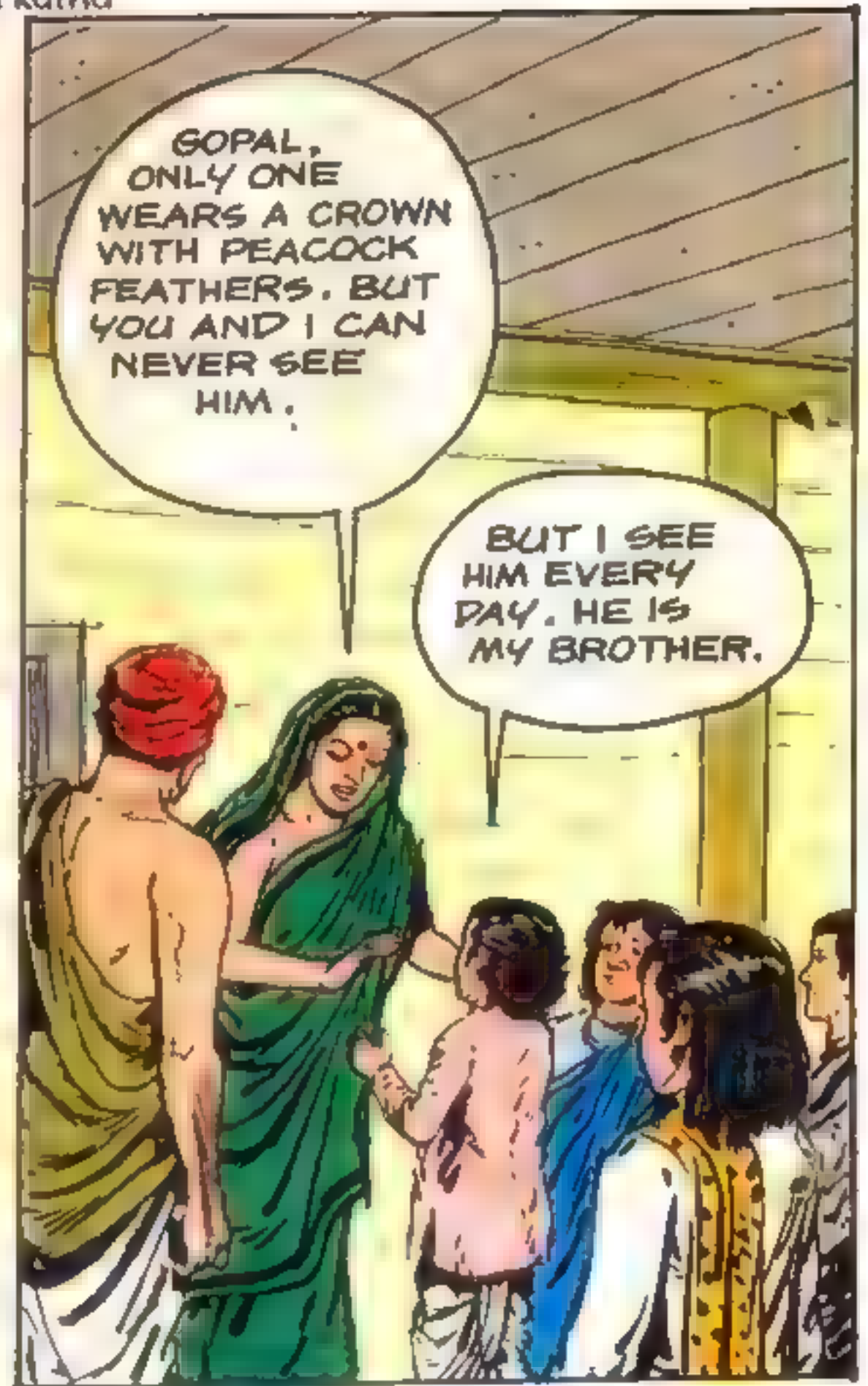


THE TEACHER POURED AND POURED, BUT STILL THE POT OF CURDS REMAINED FULL.



DUMBFOUNDED, THE TEACHER TURNED TO GOPAL.







CAN YOU TAKE ME TO THIS BROTHER OF YOURS THEN?

OF COURSE, SIR. COME WITH ME INTO THE FOREST.

GOPAL TOOK HIS TEACHER INTO THE FOREST, AND WHEN THEY REACHED THE THICKEST PART —



BROTHER GOPAL, THIS IS YOUR LITTLE BROTHER CALLING. COME TO ME.

THERE WAS NO ANSWER. GOPAL CALLED AGAIN.



BROTHER GOPAL, BROTHER GOPAL, PLEASE, WON'T YOU COME?



THE SOUND OF THE FLUTE ROSE MELODIOUSLY AND THEN THERE WAS SILENCE. THE TEACHER FELL TO HIS KNEES.

MY LORD, MY LORD, I HAVE HEARD YOU. THROUGH A YOUNG CHILD, YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME NOT TO SCORN THE HUMBLE.



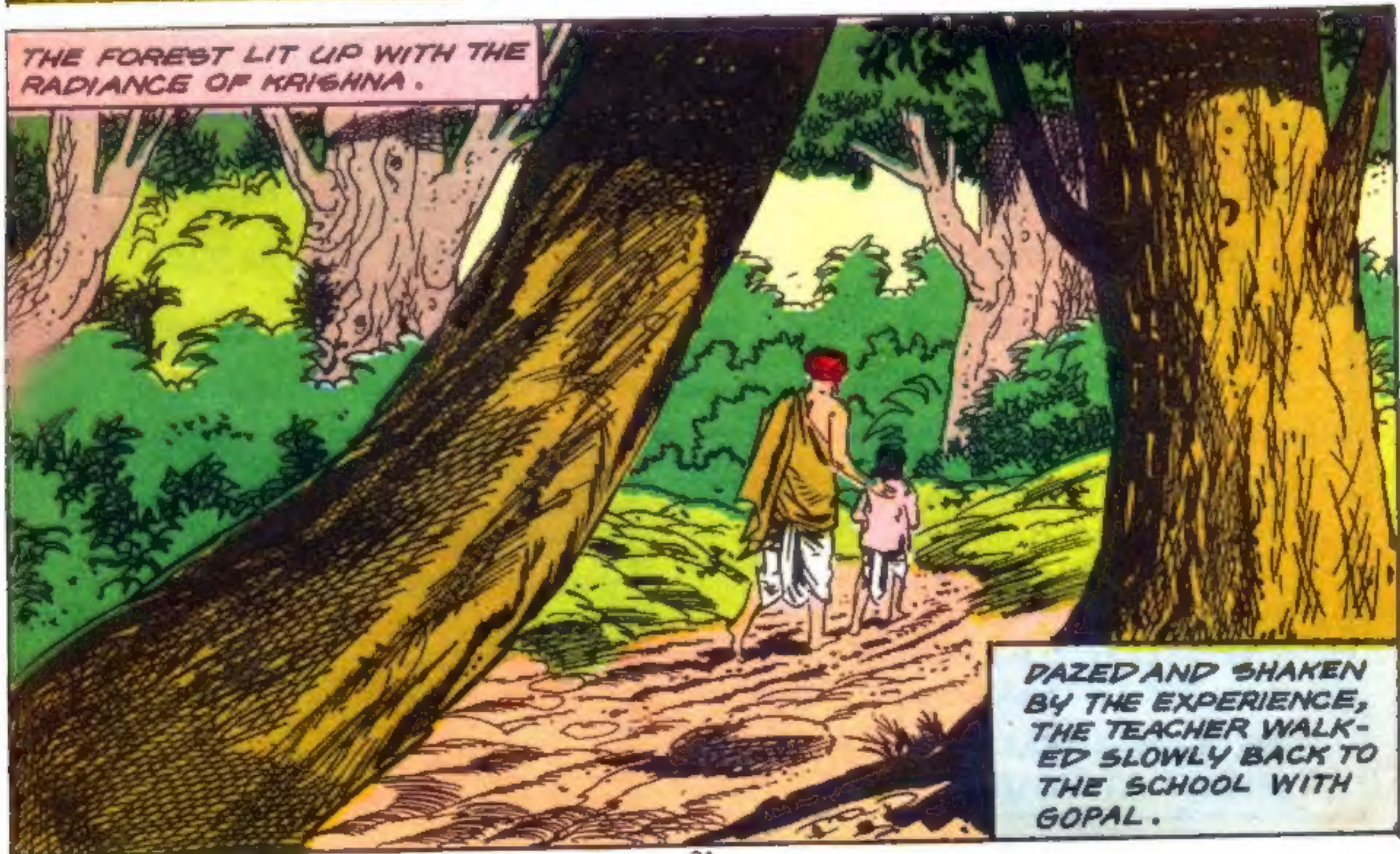
GOPAL KNEW NOW WHO HIS BROTHER REALLY WAS.



BECAUSE OF YOU, MY CHILD, WE HAVE PARTAKEN OF CURDS FROM THE VERY HANDS OF THE LORD.



THE FOREST LIT UP WITH THE RADIANCE OF KRISHNA.



DAZED AND SHAKEN BY THE EXPERIENCE, THE TEACHER WALKED SLOWLY BACK TO THE SCHOOL WITH GOPAL.

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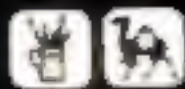
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